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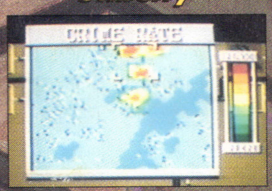
March 1992

MAPS AND TIPS:
Sega's
Phantasy Star III, Part III

Nintendo's
SimCity



VG&CE Looks to the Stars for the Best Space Games

WE REVIEW THE SNES *CONTRA* MISSION FROM KONAMI—
Does it Hold True to Previous Efforts?

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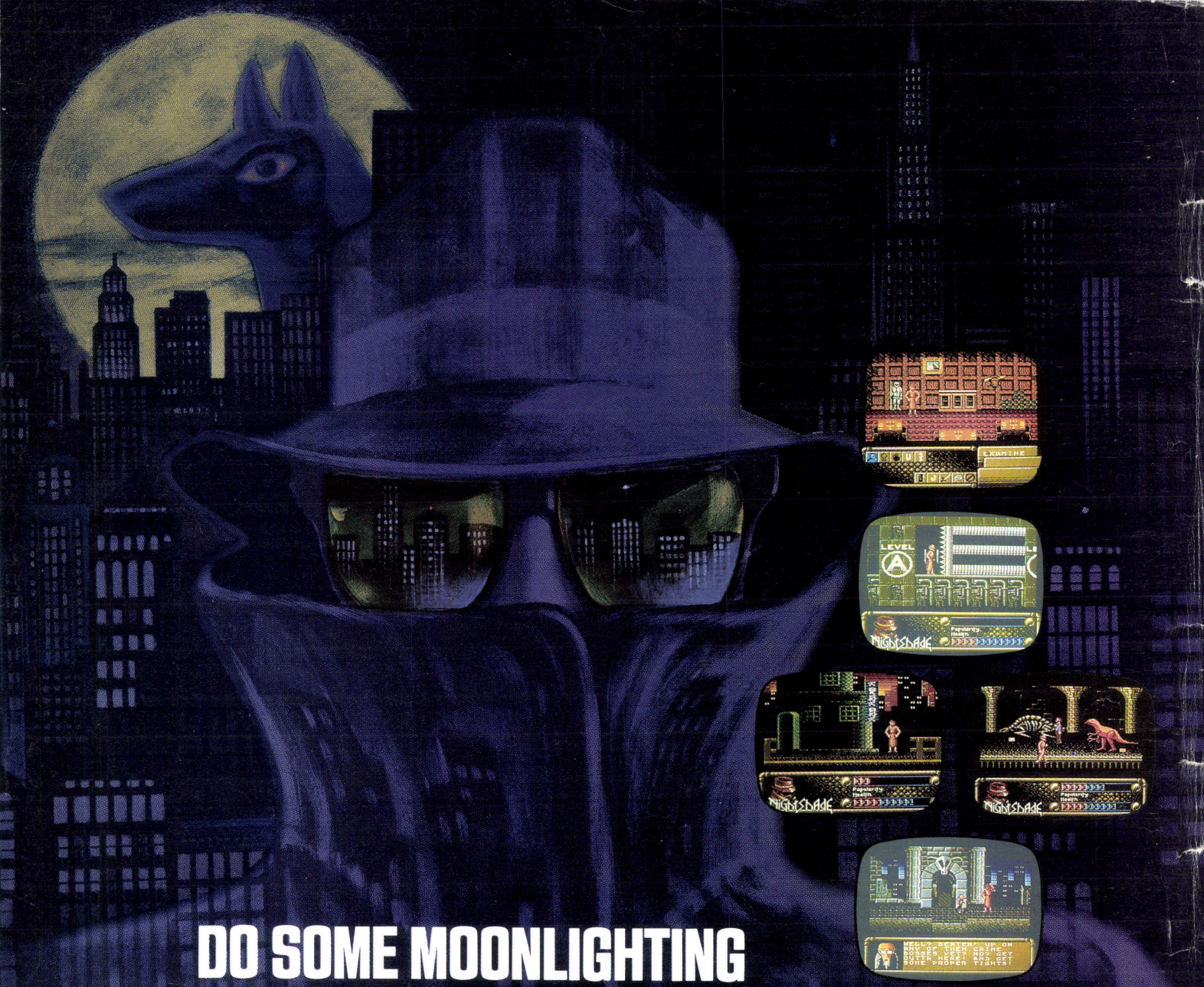

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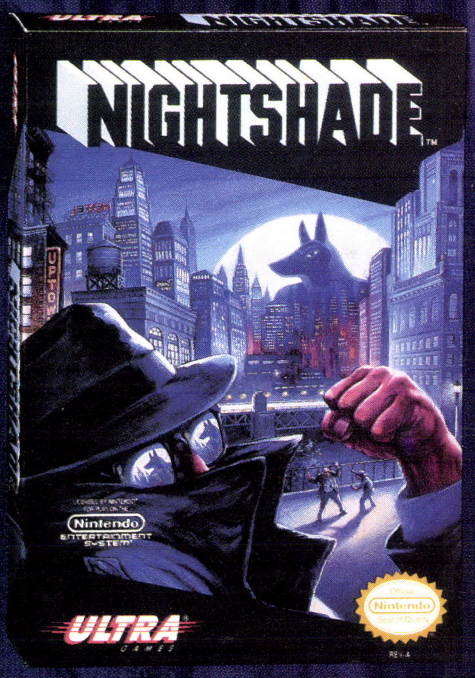

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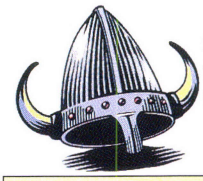
THE FIRST GAME THAT TAKES 1500 YEARS TO SOLVE.



Somewhere there's a bull without horns.

Keeps underarm deodorant companies in business.

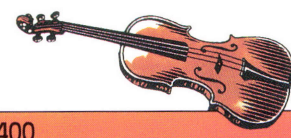
400 500 700

You'd be unhappy too if you'd been sitting indian style this long.

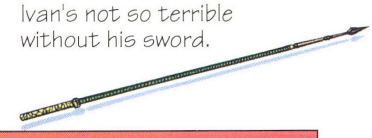
さむらい

800 900 1100

Carmen Sandiego goes cruising.



Ivan's not so terrible without his sword.



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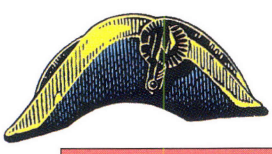
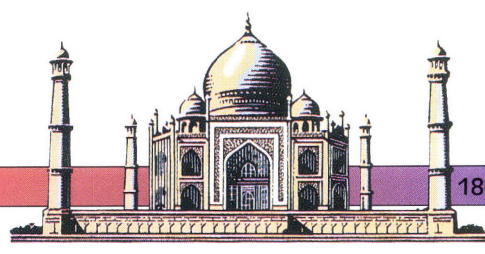
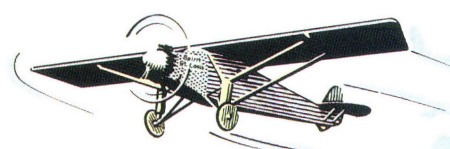
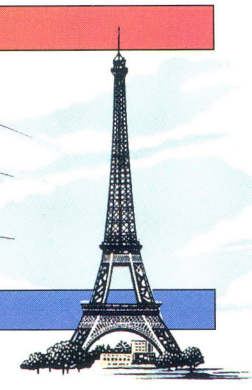






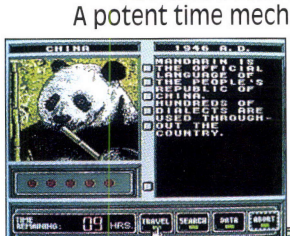
Spirit of ~~St. Louis~~ Sandiego



1600 1800 1900

But that may not be enough time to rescue history's priceless treasures from the grasp of the infamous Carmen Sandiego and her fifteen conniving cohorts. V.I.L.E. henchmen who trek through time pillaging for profit.

As Acme's renowned Detective, you've been entrusted with the Chronoskimmer 325i. A potent time mechanism that transports you over fifteen centuries through 80 missions and 48 locations. Interrogate witnesses, meet secretly with informants and scan areas for valuable clues that might break the biggest cases of all time wide open.



But your detecting days are numbered 'cause you only have a limited number of hours before the Chronoskimmer loses power, hurling you back to headquarters. So use your New American Desk Encyclopedia to quickly decipher leads to please a demanding Chief who despises failure.

Fortunately, you'll also have a Capture Robot in your arsenal to hunt down history's time bandits.

So pack your bags and report to headquarters. You're about to learn how to follow in the footsteps of history's greatest criminal.

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Now Available for the NES™

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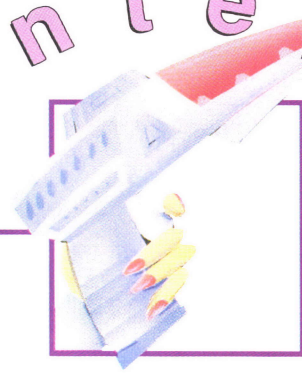
CIRCLE #101 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Cover: Konami's *Contra III—The Alien Wars* introduces the popular NES series to the 16-bit Super NES. Turn to page 36 for a review of the latest in an ongoing *Contra* epic.

Cover Art: Jim Auckland

Contents

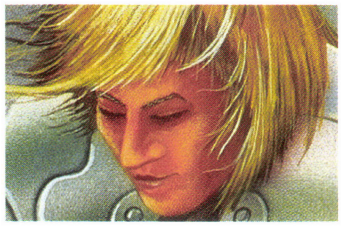


MARCH 1992

FEATURES

64
GAMING ON THE GO
Star Trek, The Lucky Dime Caper Starring Donald Duck, Pyramids of Ra, Toki, Jordan vs. Bird: One on One, The Chessmaster, Q*Bert for Game Boy *and* Xybots.

72
SIMCITY PLAYER'S GUIDE
by Clayton Walnum
Clay takes us on a tour of this engrossing, award-winning simulation for the Super NES and offers instruction on basic city management that will allow you to turn your electronic town into a metropolis.



82
PHANTASY STAR III PLAYER'S GUIDE, PART III
by Clayton Walnum
We'll finish up our long journey and follow the adventures of the third-generation characters as they defeat the scariest boss demon, Dark Force.

REVIEWS & PREVIEWS

36
VIDEO-GAME REVIEWS
Contra III: The Alien Wars, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III: The Manhattan Project, Wizards & Warriors III, Marble Madness, Mega Man 4, Heavy Nova, Terminator 2: Judgment Day, TV Sports: Baseball, Rings of Power, The Blue Marlin, Ballistix *and* Night Creatures.

102
COMPUTER-GAME STRATEGIES
by Russ Ceccola and John Schnyder
Let our binary escorts demonstrate to you how to be stealthy in Wing Commander II *and how to be a galactic hero in* MegaTraveller 2.

104
COMPUTER-GAME REVIEWS
4-D Boxing, The Adventures of Willy Beamish, Earl Weaver Baseball II, F-117A: Stealth Fighter 2.0, Gunship 2000, Riders of Rohan, Corporation *and* AD&D: Shadow Sorcerer.

90
SPACE 1992: FUTURISTIC FUNWARE
by Arnie Katz
Sci-fi games have maintained a consistently high level of popularity unmatched by any other theme. Join Arnie as he takes a look at video and computer games that have carved out this genre.

DEPARTMENTS

EDITOR'S LETTER 6
READER MAIL 8
TIP SHEET 14
NEWS BITS 20
EASTER EGG HUNT 30
INSIDE GAMING 78
ADVERTISER INDEX 96
FANDANGO 100
GAME DOCTOR 114

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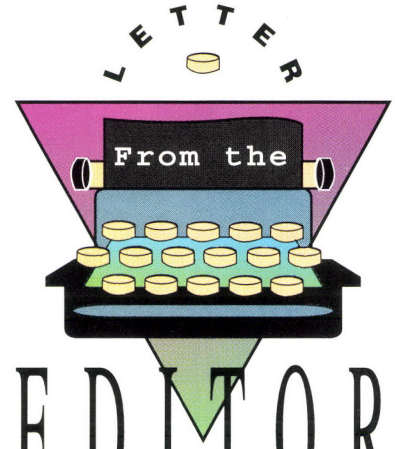
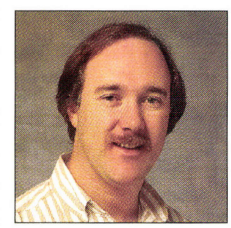


Recently, VG&CE's editors participated in a media briefing of upcoming Konami products. Certainly, the Konami and Ultra lines of products are some of the most popular carts around, as Konami Inc.'s senior vice-president, Emil Heidkamp, noted, because Konami is the biggest producer of third-party software for the market. It has just released its 50th NES title, and has surpassed 25 million carts sold. You can be sure that this will continue with the Super NES.



It's also interesting that Konami, at least in Japan, has just started developing games for the PC Engine, the Japanese version of the TurboGrafx-16. Konami's involvement with NEC could help the TG-16's flagging U.S. situation, not only by giving TG-16 owners some great and familiar games—we have it from good sources that the PC Engine version of *Gradius* is perhaps the closest to the arcade original—but also by drawing other companies into negotiations with NEC. "If it's good enough for Konami," smaller companies may say, "it's good enough for us."

Konami is a solid company, but how did it get that way? Many would point to its solid string of hits—as our cover this month attests to with another *Contra* sequel—but you can't ignore one other strength: shrewd licensing.

The electronic-game market is flooded with games that follow on the heels of a movie, TV show or the popularity of a sports star. However, what some people don't realize is the tacking on of a licensed name doesn't *ensure* a game's success.

It was another point that Heidkamp made regarding Konami's use of licensed titles for the game market that struck me, making a comparison to that of a layer cake. Putting solid game design behind a license makes for a very playable cart, while putting layer after layer of reliance on the license to carry the title results in a weak and lopsided cake.

Granted, it's not necessary for a company to utilize a high-profile media character to guarantee success—look at games like *Sonic the Hedgehog*, the whole *Mega Man* series and *Blazing Lazers*—yet Heidkamp does make a point, that game play is the crucial ingredient, which creates a title that is talked about for months after its release. The license is a great way to get consumers to turn their eyes to a game, but it shouldn't be the *sole* attraction. And too many companies have leaned on their licenses without giving the consumer much of a game to play.

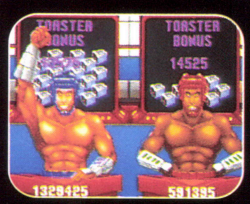
What do you think? We'd like to hear from you on this and other issues. Just write to us at our editorial offices—the address to the left. And thanks for reading VG&CE.

—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor

BRING THE HIT ARCADE GAME HOME!

SUPER SMASH T.V.

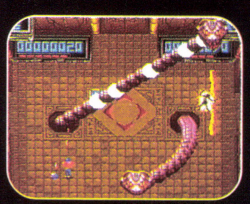
Relentless Onslaught!


Big Prizes!

Scarface Massacre!

M.C. Mayhem!

Total Carnage!


Cobra Extermination!

SAVE YOUR QUARTERS...

Once, the only way to experience the explosive, arcade action of Smash TV was to play it in the arcades. That was then...

SUPER SMASH TV™ for your SUPER NES™ is now! It's the *real* arcade game! Sure, you can win cars and toasters - but first destroy the metal munching twin cobras, 30 tons of angry Mutoid Man, club wielding mechanoids and more. After all, this is the game with the ultimate in prizes...your life!

Tune into SUPER SMASH TV™ and bring the smashing arcade action home!

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CIRCLE #104 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

...AND DON'T SPEND IT ALL IN ONE PLACE

Dear VG&CE:

Did you also receive a copy of the letter from the California State's Attorney General's office proclaiming a "swift and successful settlement" in State of California vs. Nintendo of America Inc? (It applies to all 50 states.) I received my Instant Redemption Certificate from Nintendo today, and it was the most unfunny joke perpetrated on the public by any state's Attorney General's office to my recollection.

Rather than demonstrate to Nintendo why their well-known price-fixing policies are objectionable, the government distributed to the public a promotional item guaranteed to bring in more sales for Nintendo, an item useless to the public unless they choose to do more business with the guilty party. It's no wonder that Nintendo has "cooperated fully" in bringing about this settlement; they profit from every single redemption of this "monetary relief."

The letter distributed by the Attorney General's office insults the intelligence of us all. Who are they trying to kid? A rebate coupon on a future purchase hardly "demonstrate(s) how the antitrust laws can help to protect the consumers of our nation and state." I suppose their concept of a settlement in the Beech-Nut faux apple-juice case would've been 50¢ off of our *next* purchase of Beech-Nut Baby Food!

The 50 Attorneys General sold out. Now, if I can just find an NES game pak that sells for $0.01, I'd be happy to purchase it and collect my $4.99 "monetary relief."

—Josh Mandel
Oakhurst, California

As we said in our July 1991 Yea & Nay *column, we view it as a mistake: Somehow our government thought it was better to punish Nintendo by selling more carts. Bad, Nintendo, bad!*

CALL A DOCTOR!

Dear VG&CE:

Let me begin by saying that VG&CE is the finest electronic gaming publication around. As an older gamer (25 years of age), I truly appreciate VG&CE's in-depth coverage of the industry, as well as its relatively "adult" look and format.

Although not a subscriber, I am nevertheless a faithful reader, and have not missed an issue since your debut three years ago. Unlike most other readers, I do not turn directly to the game reviews; rather, I most enjoy the departments such as *News Bits*, *Inside Gaming* and, in particular, the *Game Doctor* column.

I was greatly dismayed, then, to find the Doc's column missing from the November issue. As a longtime follower of the gaming scene, I have enjoyed the Doc's work for nearly a decade, going back to the early days of *Electronic Games* magazine. I would hate to think that he had been "let go."

If this is the case, I would urge you to reconsider. Such a move would be both shortsighted and counterproductive, particularly in view of the coincident price increase. While it may be tempting to cut costs in this recessionary environment, VG&CE's long-term survival will only be assured by providing the best possible coverage of the gaming scene, not by alienating readers.

In closing, I would encourage you to continue providing the broadest based coverage of the gaming scene; the market is already crowded with magazines that focus narrowly on video games. Features such as your profile of Ralph Baer are a real treat to gamers such as myself—I only wish you would include them more often. Best of luck in all of VG&CE's endeavors!

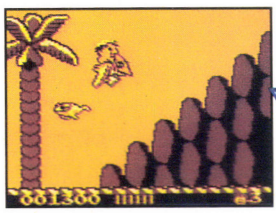
—Daniel Belanger
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

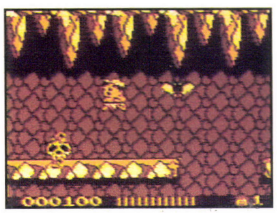
First of all, it's important to notice that, though the cover price has gone up with the November 1991 issue, the subscription price is the lowest it's been since it was introduced. At only $19.95 for a year, you won't find a better value.

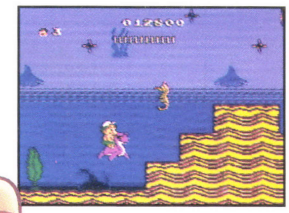
Rest assured that the Game Doctor hasn't been put out to pasture. He is as strong as ever and still relied upon by the VG&CE editors for his insights and tip-of-the-tongue answers. His unintended vacation in the November issue was the effect of last-minute changes in the magazine's content. Occasionally, a column gets chopped, but we never plan on having it happen on a regular basis. Of course, the Doc's vote to have Andy Eddy sit out an editorial for a month still hasn't been addressed, but you never know what will happen.

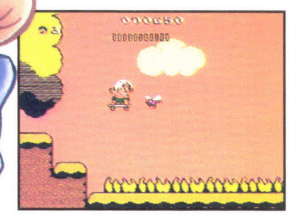
Letters to be considered for publication should be addressed to *Reader Mail*, VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Letters may be edited for style, clarity and space considerations. We regret that we cannot respond to all mail received.

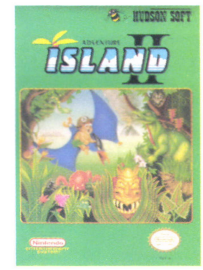
Master the Islands!











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CIRCLE #106 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

All kidding aside, you bring up good points. It is our intention to do the absolute best magazine, not only from the standpoint of quality information, but also with an attractive look and providing insight beyond reproach (see the final letter for more on this). We feel we are accomplishing that, and we hope to be doing it for years to come.

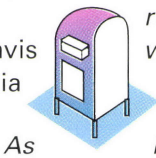
WISHING FOR ANOTHER GENIE

Dear VG&CE:

I wanted to compliment you on your magazine.

I also want to ask you if [Galoob is] thinking about making a Game Genie for the Genesis, and if you know what the price will be?

—Steven Travis
San Diego, California



The news is good, Steven. As you read this, Galoob is preparing to release the Genesis version of the Game Genie—and with Sega's approval, too. Though as we write this the price hasn't been firmly set, we understand that it will cost slightly more than the Game Genie for the NES.

BERATING THE RATING CREATORS

Dear VG&CE:

I would like to say that your ratings on games really stink! I mean just look at the game *Fatal Rewind* for the Sega Genesis! I bought it because of your ratings toward that game. The graphics really stink and the playability was really boring. Even with the instructions, I still couldn't understand the game play at all. I know that you'll never print this letter in a thousand years, but who would if they are getting all this criticism from one of their readers?

All I can say is that I hope VG&CE is not giving out better ratings toward the games of the big advertisers in this magazine. If you are, then this magazine should go out of business because you (the staff of VG&CE) misused our trust toward your game ratings. If you are not, then you should get some new and really qualified game raters, because whomever is rating the games now are either doing it in their sleep or just plain don't care about this magazine at all! So please do something about your magazine before I get my ratings from another magazine. Thank you for taking your time in reading this letter!

—Tammi Wong
Manhattan, New York

Hey, Tammi, don't hold back, okay? We tried reading your letter, but it kept bursting into flames in our hands. Whoa!

On the issue of ratings: Our reviewers attempt to come up with an indication of how the games play from their own perspective. As we've said before, it's important to note that this is one person's opinion and may differ from one player to another. Use the ratings as guidelines. Read the text descriptions contained within the reviews. Get the opinions of other players. Of course, the best method is to see the game before you buy.

We'd like to make it clear to our readers that we never consider how many advertising pages a company buys when we review a product. Electronic Arts is a good example: It buys a good amount of advertising in VG&CE, but take a look at the review of Jordan vs. Bird: One on One *in this month's* Gaming on the Go. *Sorry to say, but those are painful numbers. We try to provide a magazine for the readers, not for the advertisers. If we did an advertisers' magazine, we wouldn't get any respect from the readers, and would slowly decline. Doing a readers' mag may at times get us in some hot water with potential advertisers, but we believe it's the best way to operate. You tell us.*

Thanks for the up-front comments, Tammi. It helps us improve—and it's a lot more fun to read than the endless "You guys are great" letters you see elsewhere. The VG&CE editors don't need any bigger heads!

CIRCLE #107 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Get a Better Grip on Reality

Play True Golf Classics with the Power of Polysys!

TRUE GOLF CLASSICS™

Step up to True Golf Classics. A breakthrough, 3-D golf simulation made possible with the power of Polysys. With 16-bit digitized graphics. A full, 360-degree view. And action so real, you'll never take your eye off the ball.

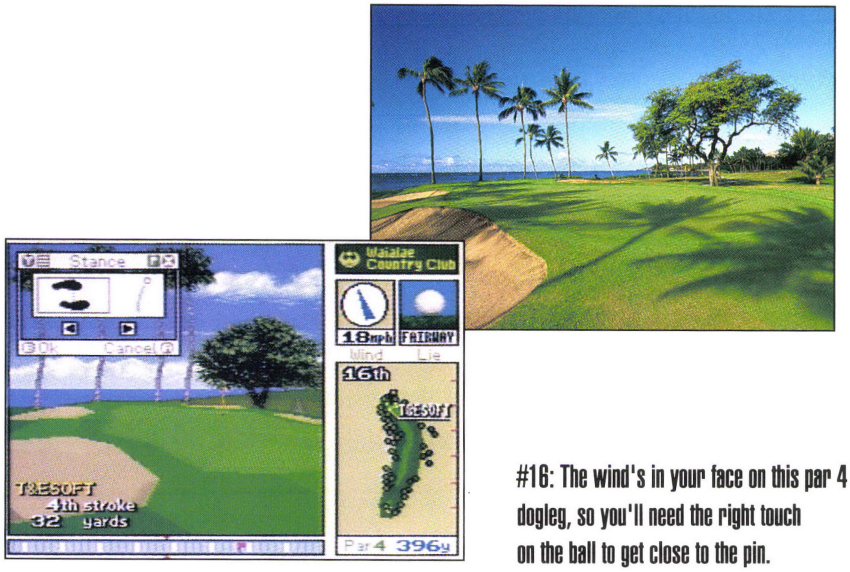
Take It On Tour.

Forget those fantasy holes other games dream up. True Golf Classics takes you out to an actual PGA course: Waialae Country Club, home of the United Hawaiian Open.

Nothing Else Even Comes Close.

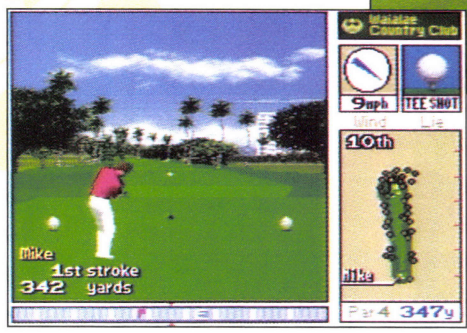
It takes a true stroke of genius to make a golf game this easy to learn yet so challenging to master.

Greater Control: Hit big off the tees. Blast out of the bunkers. In True Golf Classics, every ball flies, and lies, just like it would in the real game.



#16: The wind's in your face on this par 4 dogleg, so you'll need the right touch on the ball to get close to the pin.

Superior gameplay: Look at your shots from eye level or zoom up to the overhead view. Use the 3-D grid to get an accurate read on how the ball breaks on the greens. Want to see how much you've improved? True Golf Classics updates your handicap after each tournament round.



#10: Play it straight off the tee on this 347 yard par 4. Break out your driver to set up an easy approach shot.

Topflight fun: No other golf game gives you this much. Full-color Course Guide helps you sharpen your game with inside tips from Waialae's head golf professional.

#7: A tough par 3, with multiple bunkers and three-level green. You'll have to fine tune your stance to stay off the beach.

Official Waialae scorecard includes the course layout to help you map out your round. And the built-in Battery Backup tracks your stats and saves your game--so you can quit when you want and pick up where you left off.

True Golf Classics. It's true golf reality. Down to a tee.

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CIRCLE #108 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Even the best player has trouble with a game now and again, but where can you turn for help? VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT has designed ***Tip Sheet*** to give you, the reader, answers to questions such as, "How do I defeat the end boss on this level?" or, "I've looked everywhere, but I can't find the blue vase." So if you're having a problem on a game, write to us, and our group of experts will do everything they can to solve it. Send your letters to:

VG&CE,

9171 Wilshire Blvd.,

Suite 300

Beverly Hills, CA 90210

Attn: *Tip Sheet*

TIP SHEET

by Donn Nauert

I just got *Warrior of Rome* for Genesis. Do you have any passwords for each of the levels that can help?

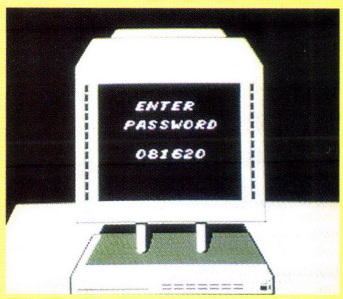
—Francisco Estep
Oceanside, California

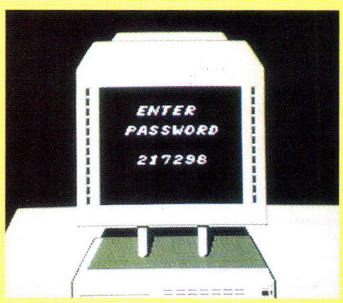
Sorry, we don't have codes for the different levels, but you can input this code to reach the end:
GREBDQ3QNE.

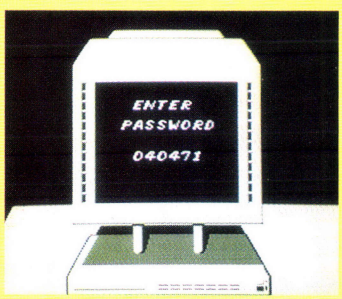
I am having trouble with *Code Name: Viper* for the NES. Could you give me a code to the last area?

—Carlos Moulden
Baltimore, Maryland

To reach the last level, enter 217298. Other codes include 040471 for Level 4 and 081620 for Level 8.







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CIRCLE #109 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

I can't find the tune to play on the pipe organ in chapter five of *Star Tropics*. Please help.

—Dewey Eaves
Zwolle, Louisiana

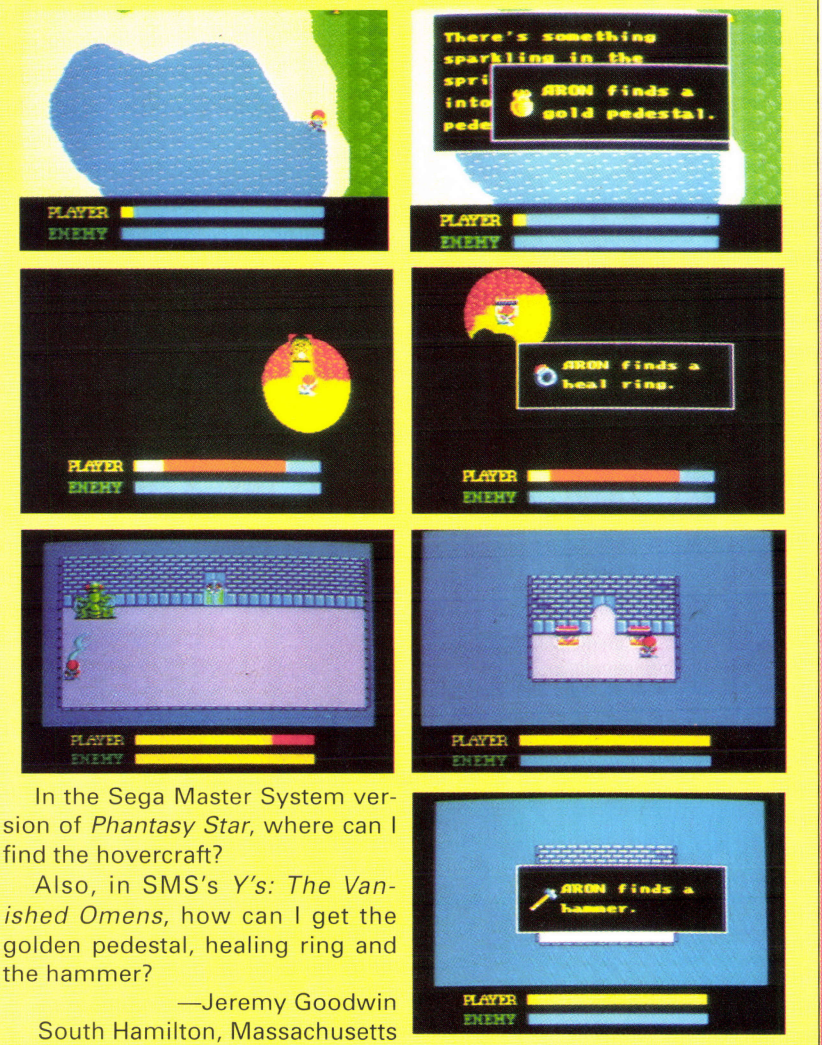
The tune you need to play so that you can enter the underground tunnel is Pete the Parrot's tune. In the photo, translate the second sentence to Do Re Mi Fa So La Ti, or, on the organ, play the keys in this order: one, three, five, four, one and three.

Also, if you have the Game Genie, you can get infinite energy by typing in SZNZGPAX and VZVZLOSV.

I recently purchased the game *Super C* for the NES, and I was wondering if there is a code or any clues to help get through all the levels. Thank you very much for your time.

—Diane Pope
Lakewood, California

There isn't a level select or invincibility code for the game, but there is a code to get extra men. During the title screen, press R, L, D, U, A, B and ***START****. There's also a sound test for the game. During the title screen with player selection, press and hold A and B, then hit* ***START****.*



In the Sega Master System version of *Phantasy Star*, where can I find the hovercraft?

Also, in SMS's *Y's: The Vanished Omens*, how can I get the golden pedestal, healing ring and the hammer?

—Jeremy Goodwin
South Hamilton, Massachusetts

First, fly to Uzo on Motavia and head southeast (or down-left). Enter the Casba cave and defeat the Casba dragon to get the amber eye. On the other side of the cave is the city of Casba. Go to the city of Casba, buy a land rover and talk to the villager about the hovercraft. When he asks if you have heard of the hovercraft, say "yes." Now return to Uzo and talk to the villagers until one tells you where the flute is buried. Return to Bortevo junkyard and enter the first house on Alis' left. Go in and "search," and you'll automatically receive the hovercraft.

The Gold Pedestal is located in the top-right corner of the body of water in the field between Minea and Zepik Village. The healing ring is located in the lower right-hand corner of Level 2 in the mine. When you see the goon guarding the doorway, you know you've found the correct entrance. Finally, the hammer is one of the prizes you'll receive after you defeat Insecta on the eighth floor of the Tower of the Doomed. Insecta is behind the green door on the far left of the eighth floor.

I recently purchased the *Nintendo Power Strategy Guide* for *Super Mario Bros. 3*. On page 35 (for World 4), it shows a different kind of suit on the B line in the World Data Box. Can you please tell me how to get it?

—Jason Smith
Belleville, Illinois

That is a good question, since there isn't a single reference or other icon like it in the book. The people at Nintendo say it's simply Hammer Mario.

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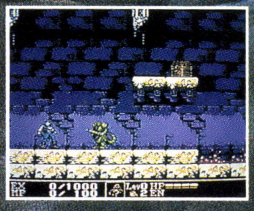
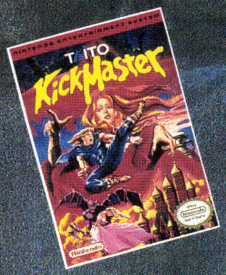
Grab Dozens of Items to Put in Your Bag of Tricks





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CRUNCH TIME!

KickMaster™

Smash! Crack! Pow! Whap! Crunch! Uugghhh! Take that you feeble grunts! Who are you? Are you one of Belzed's punks? Well then, how would you like to join my fight against that evil sorcerer and help me rescue Princess Silphee? You look like a brave dude. But, can you get 'rad'? If not, Belzed will make you his personal dart board.

You'll have to learn how to master the radical moves of an accomplished Kickmaster, like myself. Knee drops, roundhouse kicks, double butterfly kicks and the lethal blazing flip kick, will be necessary to battle this brute. The quicker you learn, the better. Capture special items to increase your magical capabilities too. Magic can get you out of some tight situations. Make no mistake though, superior agility and bruising hand-to-hand combat are your most lethal weapons. Well, school is in session kid. Start learning those moves and get cracking, crunching, and kicking. You've gotta watch your own back now. Hasta la vista, dude!

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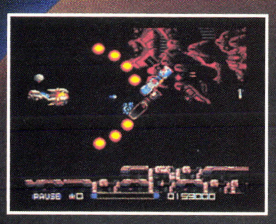

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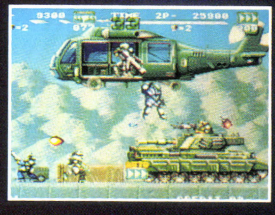
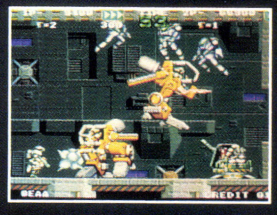
GunForce™

SUPER HOT GRAPHICS FOR SUPER NES!

STOCK UP FOR AN INVASION OF BUYERS!

GunForce blasted its way into the top ten charts in the arcades. Which means you're sure to see explosive sales on Super NES. Get ready for an assault of orders from players reading our ads about spectacular special effects. Mind-boggling graphics. And two-player simultaneous action. Put GunForce in your arsenal. And watch your profits skyrocket.





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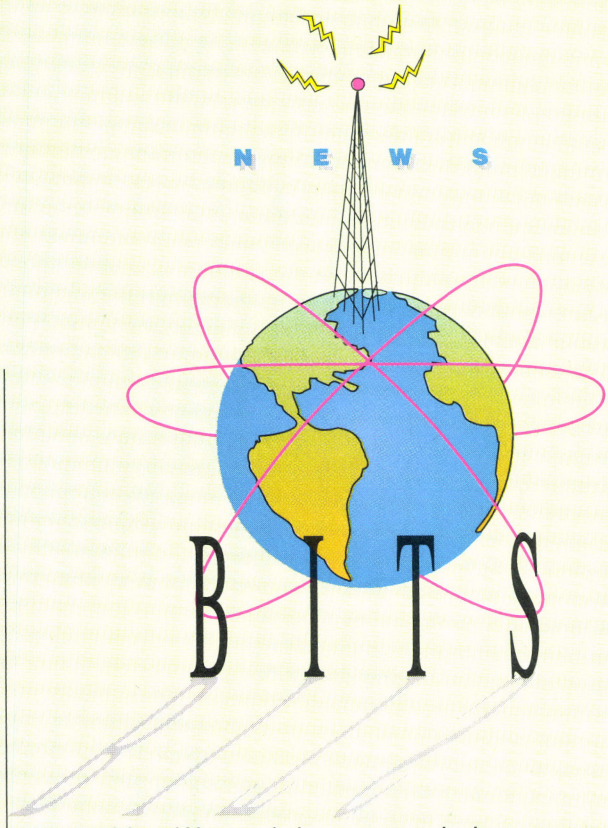
JOYCE WORLEY



Accolade Files Countersuit Against Sega

Accolade has filed multiple claims in federal court against Sega Enterprises Ltd. and its U.S. subsidiary, Sega of America Inc., in a countersuit that seeks recovery for "restraint of trade, trademark infringements and unfair business practices." Accolade also seeks recovery for Sega's allegedly "unfairly misleading consumers into believing that Accolade's Sega Genesis-compatible video-game cartridges are either produced by or licensed from Sega."

According to Alan Miller, chairman and CEO of Accolade, "Sega has consistently and unfairly pressured retailers and distributors around the world not to purchase video-game cartridges from Accolade."

He explained that Sega started shipping a modified Genesis in September 1991, which produces a pop-up message that every compatible game cartridge is "Produced By or Under License from Sega Enterprises Ltd." Miller pointed out that Accolade independently learned how to develop and manufacture compatible Genesis cartridges without help from Sega and without violating any property rights. He went on to say, "We will no longer accept Sega's interference in our business nor its continued violations of generally accepted business ethics. We are bringing this matter to the attention of the federal courts so that Sega will be forced to comply with applicable U.S. laws." The trial dates have not yet been set for the two cases.

Virtuality Unveiled at West Coast Gala

Spectrum HoloByte and CyberStudio premiered the Virtuality Entertainment System to the press in a special showing of what the company calls the first virtual reality computer-entertainment system that will be available for consumer use. Dubbed a "recreation vehicle," the player sits or stands inside the machine and uses special headsets, globes and controllers to interact with the game, as well as with other players. Stereoscopic images, projected by liquid crystal screens inside the viewer's visor, are linked to the computer system to monitor position and direction of gaze as the player moves through the world he sees.

The first games available for the high-tech system, which will be located in malls and other high-traffic areas, include *EXOREX*, in which the gamer controls a futuristic exoskeletal armored combat vehicle and *VTOL* (Vertical Take Off and Landing) that lets the player pilot a Harrier Jump Jet. Spectrum HoloByte plans to develop several original titles for Virtuality, which should be ready by early 1993.

New Firm to Market TG-16

NEC Technologies will turn over marketing of the TurboGrafx-16 video-game console to a joint venture company, Turbo Technologies Inc., effective April 1, 1991. Under the leadership of president Naoyuki Tsuji, the new Los Angeles-based company will take charge of the machine, introduced in 1989, in the U.S. market. All new hardware and software products for the TG-16 will now come from this new entity.

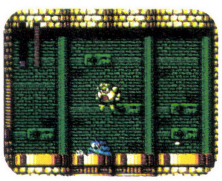
Turbo Technologies is a joint venture between NEC and one of the largest software publishers in the world, Hudson Soft. Tsuji was formerly president of Hudson Soft USA.

Comdex Computer Show Breaks Records

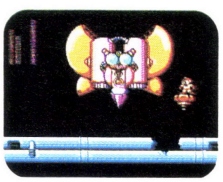
When The Interface Group, hosting entity of the industry's giant Comdex/Fall '91 trade show, counted all the heads, they had a winner. The autumn blast drew 127,000 attendees (20,000 from foreign countries) to sunny Las Vegas, where they visited 11,400 booths, sponsored by 1,950 companies.

Mega Man 4... Like Nothing Before

Crash the party at Dr. Cossack's citadel.



Toad Man will have you hopping.



Rise to new heights with the Balloon adapter.

New Enemies like Dr. Cossack. ***"Cruel!"***
New Weapons like the Mega Buster. ***"Devastating!"***
New Robots like Toad Man and Skull Man. ***"Gnarly!"*** Devices like Balloon adapters and Grappling hooks. ***"Handy!"***
Get Mega Man 4— The rest were just warm-ups. ***"Really!"***

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Comdex/Fall first started in 1979, at which time 3,948 attendees saw 267 booths, sponsored by 157 companies. Since then the growth has been steady, with the 1991 show marking an all-time high for any trade show.

Jerry Boy Bounces West

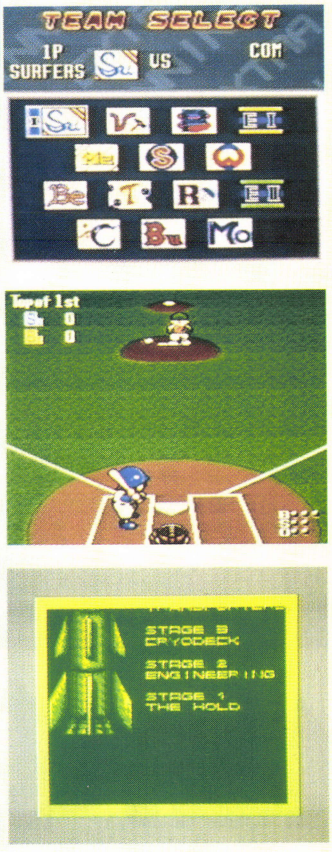
Sony Imagesoft should have its latest hit Japanese game ready for the U.S. early this spring, when the translation of *Jerry Boy* (which sold over 350,000 copies in Japan) turns into *Smart Ball* for the American market. The game, an unlikely rescue-the-princess mission, stars a blob of jelly that must slither its way through worlds of obstacles and foes as it walks, runs, flattens itself out, climbs, swims, rides (on top of creatures), oozes, bounces, jumps and otherwise manipulates itself over hostile terrain filled with mice, birds, rocks, rabbits, pigs, fires, cacti, sandworms and other nasties

determined to hinder the piece of protoplasm. The game will be available for play on the Super NES.

A free strategy guide is ready for Sony Imagesoft's recent Game Boy release, *Altered Space*. This 14-page step-by-stepper explains the goals, identifies the characters and items, spells out the dangers, then gives the gamer a puzzle-by-puzzle guide to getting through the multiple levels. To get your free copy, write to Sony Imagesoft at the address below.

The company plans to keep the boys of summer swinging their controllers with the Super NES version of *Extra Innings*. A company spokesperson predicted that American players will be impressed by the "quality and degree of total player control" over base runners, batters and pitchers. It sold around 300,000 copies in Japan under the title *Gamba League*.

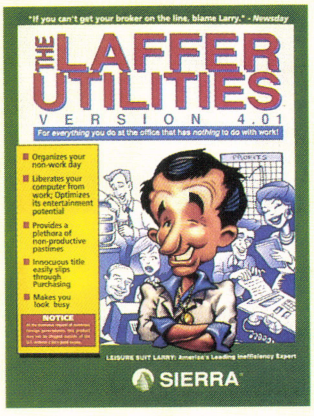
Sony Imagesoft Inc.
9200 Sunset Blvd., Suite 820
Los Angeles, CA 90069
(310) 858-3777



Genesis to Get a Genie

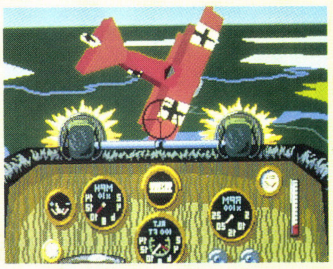
Lewis Galoob Toys, the folks that successfully defended the right to market the Game Genie videogame enhancer for the NES, will soon pull another genie out of the bottle, this one for use with the Sega Genesis. The game enhancer should be ready by the second quarter of 1992.

Details on the new version of the peripheral are scanty, but we do know that it'll come with a 50-game code book that will definitely include *Sonic the Hedgehog*.



CompuServe Builds Game Room

CompuServe is catering to personal-computer gamers with a special set of services for modem-to-modem players. The giant telecommunications company has established an MTM Lobby (a special room to meet other gamers), an MTM Challenge board to help gamers find opponents and schedule games and a series of MTM Forums for gamers to discuss tactics, ask questions and join tournaments.



CompuServe onliners also have more than a dozen single and multiplayer games available, in addition to the regular information services of electronic mail, financial and stock information, news and product information.

Sierra Inks Cartridge Rep Pact

Computer-gaming giant Sierra On-Line is definitely getting serious about taking its computer-entertainment software line into the cartridge market. One step that signals an intensified effort to license such famous titles as *King's Quest*, *Police Quest*, *Space Quest* and *Leisure Suit Larry* to videogame manufacturers is an agreement with Canada-based International Computer Group.

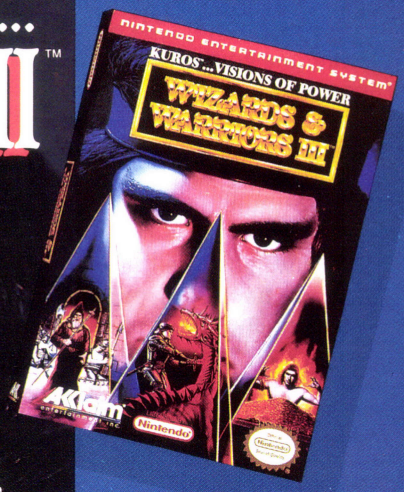
Under the agreement, ICG will evaluate and represent all Sierra games for all opportunities outside home computing. "This is a wonderful opportunity for ICG to build the bridge between Sierra and other formats," related Barry Friedman, ICG president. "Sierra will bring a lot to the cartridge and handheld market with its well-established titles."

"Sierra has long avoided manufacturing video-game cartridges," said Ken Williams, president of Sierra. "In the past, we have refused to license

The Greatest NES™ Adventure Continues...

WIZARDS & WARRIORS III™

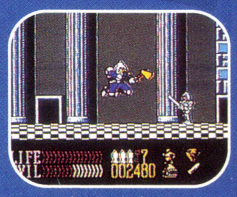
Kuros: Visions of Power™



When Kuros™ last did battle with the evil wizard Malkil™ atop Icefire Mountain, he raised his IronSword™ in triumph...or so he thought.

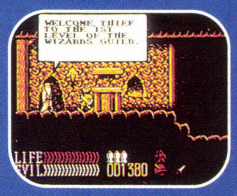
Without warning, a powerful bolt of magic robbed Kuros of his armour, memory, and honor. But now, the distant presence of evil stirs in his mind, leading him to the once fair city of Piedup, where the villainous *soul* of Malkil now reigns.

Without his armour, Kuros will need crafty disguises to travel undetected, ready to do battle as wizard, nobleman or thief. From the gloomy depths of the dungeon to the palace containing riches beyond belief...the time has come for Kuros to turn his visions of power into reality!



Kuros the Knight Warrior wields his mighty Silver-Sword in the face of danger.

To give Malkil a taste of his own medicine, Kuros must master the craft of wizardry.



Kuros, disguised as a thief, moves secretly through Piedup.

Grotesque creatures of the underworld stand between Kuros and his ultimate battle.

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CIRCLE #104 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

our products to videogame publishers, fearing consumer confusion. However, last year we licensed Konami the right to publish *King's Quest* for the Nintendo Entertainment System and have been pleased with the results. We now believe it is in Sierra's best interests to allow noncomputer owners a way to experience our products, and that ICG is the right firm to exploit this opportunity."

Modifier Cartridge Available for Genesis

The Action Replay cartridge, designed in Europe, allows Genesis owners to adjust parameters in many older and most newer Genesis cartridges. Using special codes provided in the instruction manual and a forthcoming monthly *Gamebuster* newsletter, the gamer can get infinite lives, unlimited power, extra fuel, more ammunition and other similar enhancements to standard play. An extra bonus is that the Action Replay cartridge functions as an adapter for Japanese cartridges.

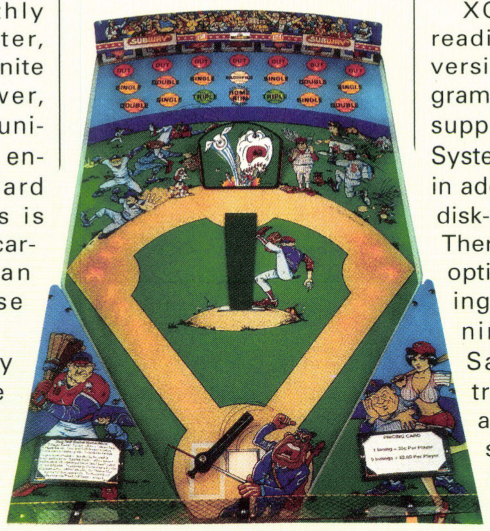
The Action Replay cartridge is available from Gamebusters and retails for $79.99, plus $4 for shipping.

Gamebusters
931 S.R. 434, Suite 225
Altamonte Springs, FL
32714
(800) 962-0494

Coin-Ops Give Free Sports Cards

Players of *Slugfest* and *High Impact* get free baseball and football cards when they win these action-sports games at their favorite arcade. The cards used are the regular Topps editions.

"A few problems have cropped up," admits Jim Charney of Playball! Cards & Novelties, a Minneapolis, Minnesota, distributor. Some amusement-center operators have refilled machines with different brands of cards, and the double-sided glossies cause the machine to stick and dispense cards only intermittently. Another sore point is that arcades fill the coin-ops with "commons" (stacks of cards with all rookies and stars removed). "Players want the collectible cards, not these," Charney insisted.



Commodore Slashes CDTV Price

The CDTV Interactive Multimedia player has a new, lower retail price. Commodore announced in mid-December that its system will now sell for $799, bundled with *The New Grolier Electronic Encyclopedia* and *Lemmings*. The extra software represents a $450 value.

"CDTV illustrates how interactive multimedia can change the way consumers can be educated and entertained," said David Rosen, Commodore's director of international marketing.

Upgrades, Add-Ons and Enhancements

If it was good before, it's better now. That's the theme of the current crop of new software that builds on previous successes.

XOR Corporation has readied *MacGolf Classics*, version 1.1. The new program has 16-color graphics support on the Macintosh, System 7 compatibility and, in addition, has removed all disk-based copy protection. There are five enlargement options for close-up viewing, a driving range and nine practice greens. Sand and water traps, trees, fairways, roughs and greens make this a scenic excursion for the Macintosh golfer.

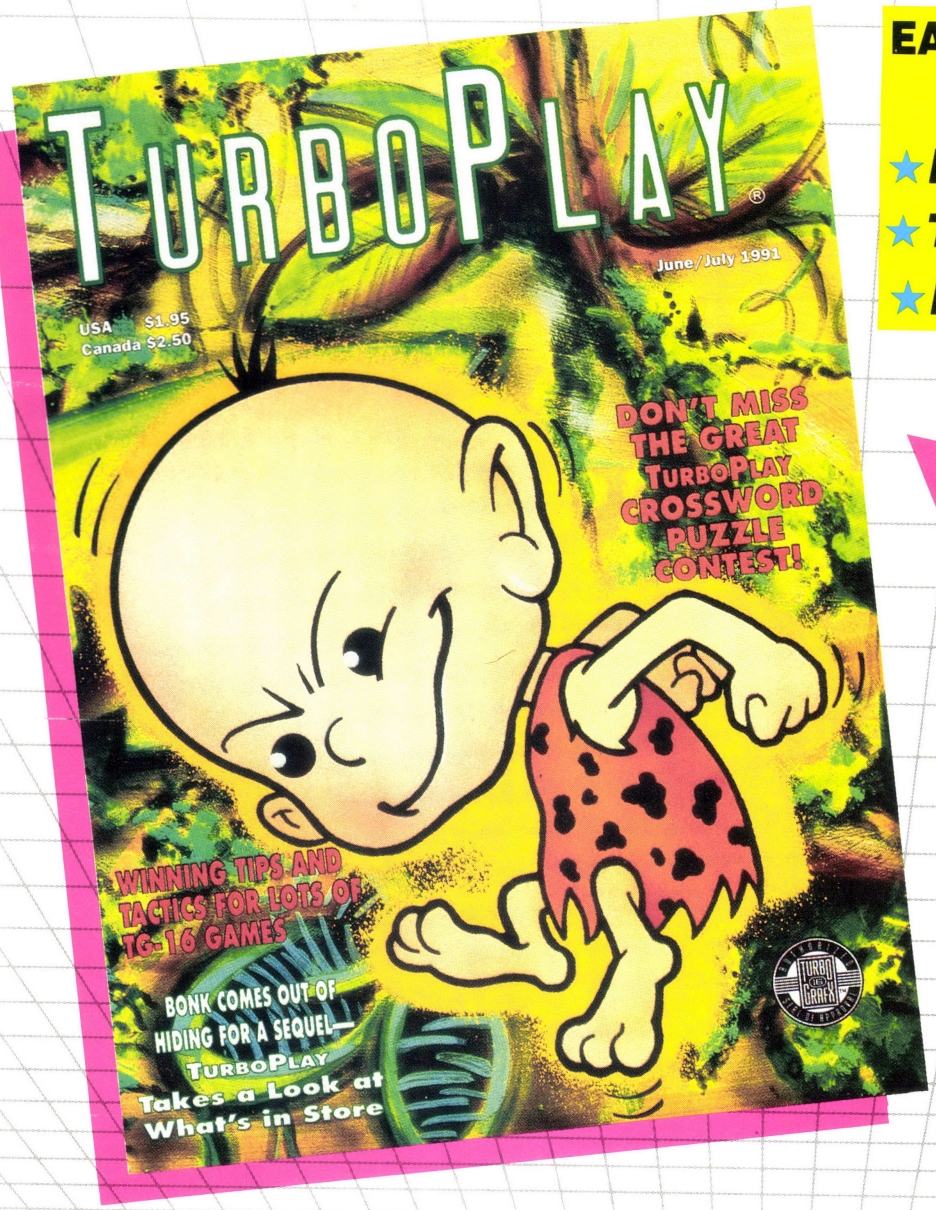
The program accommodates up to four players. Upgrades are available from XOR by calling (612) 888-0021.

Castles: The Northern Campaign (Interplay for the IBM PC; $29.95) has new scenarios to explore and kingdoms to create, with even more treacherous enemies. Enemy archers, wave attacks and reserve units enhance the strategic elements of battle; there are more ways to earn money; and new messenger screens let players affect the kingdom and its peoples. This add-on disk requires the original game, *Castles*, to play, and is available from Interplay Productions at (800) 969-GAME.

Dream Park Development has a utility that works with SSI's *Eye of the Beholder*. *Inquisitor* (for the IBM PC; $29.95) allows control over character statistics, attributes, skills and possessions, and also permits transformation of the two nonplayer characters in the game into full characters, to increase the size of the party to six. It also provides for replacement, modification and enhancement of all treasures, and lets adventurers use any level spell at any point in the game, regardless of experience or ability. Its available from Dream Park Development at (801) 484- 9809.

Lucasfilm has readied the first *Tour of Duty* disk, to expand play of *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe*. *P-38 Lightning Tour of Duty* has 16 missions (three training, eight historical and five custom), and players can also use the updated Mission Builder to create missions featuring the P-38 and any of the other aircraft available in *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe*. The add-on disk is available at most software stores or direct from Lucasfilm Games at (415) 721-3300, for $29.95.

Three-Sixty's *BattleSet #4, Indian Ocean/Persian Gulf* brings Middle Eastern conflicts into focus for Amiga, IBM PC and Macintosh computerists. It requires *Harpoon* to run, then provides the player with stealth aircraft, long-range sub-caliber rounds for battleships, advanced laser-guided artillery rounds, satellite reconnaissance, SONAR statistics, variable helicopter assets, conventional land-attack cruise missiles and much more, including new Soviet carriers, regional forces from



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OFFER EXPIRES MAY 25, 1992

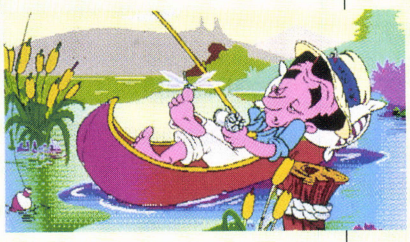
over 24 countries and several new submarines. *Harpoon*-ers will find it in local software stores for $34.95, or can order directly from Electronic Arts Distribution at (415) 572-ARTS.

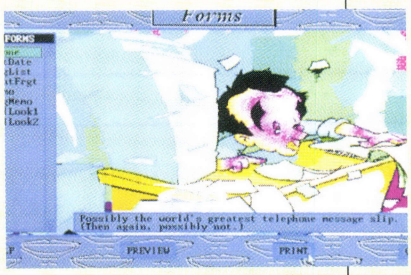
Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing Version 2.0 (Software Toolworks for the IBM PC, $49.95; Microsoft Windows compatible, $59.95) is a significantly improved version of the 1986 program. Teaching methods include customizing lessons based on user patterns and mistakes, use of engaging practice material based on popular song lyrics, trivia, famous quotes, riddles and jokes, and lots of entertainment-oriented information. Order from Software Toolworks at (415) 883-3000.

Sierra Productivity Pack Offers Subversive Fun

Gamers don't usually care much about those oh-so-useful business productivity programs, but *The Laffer Utilities* (Sierra On-Line for the IBM PC; $34.95) will be an exception to the rule. Billed as "a plethora of nonproductive pastimes," the anthology of disks contains 18 guaranteed time-wasters calculated to make productivity plummet!

Highlights include a joke database with adjustable filth-o-meter, a module that writes (and prints) sleazy tabloid-style headlines, a utility for managing office sports pools and a program to help workers find the best place to go for lunch.





IFPA Sponsors World Pinball Tourney

Milwaukee is the site of the Second Annual World Pinball Championships, scheduled for March 27, 28 and 29 at the Ramada Inn. The tournament is sponsored by the International Flipper Pinball Association, a joint venture of the Amusement & Music Operators Association, Data East, Premier and Williams/Bally-Midway.

Winners in singles and team competitions will receive more than $10,000 in prizes. The three-day pinball fest has open, women's and pin-master singles and two-person events, as well as special tournaments for kids as young as three years old! You can get additional information at (415) 263-0233.

Monopoly, Boggle Come to Game Boy

Two of the world's most popular board games are now available in electronic form as cartridges for the Game Boy. Parker Brothers, the publisher of both Monopoly and Boggle, has made the two titles its first thrust into the portable cartridge game business.

Monopoly is a faithful translation of the enduring real estate trading game. The Game Boy cart features overhead and close-up visual displays, accommodates up to four players and keeps track of everyone's title deeds, cash and mortgages.

Boggle inclines the classic 4 x 4 grid, the 5 x 5 playfield of Big Boggle and three completely new variations. If the word-finding game isn't tough enough, players can solve anagrams or guess the category that connects all the words on the grid. The "Use Up" variation challenges players to clear the field of all 25 letters by forming words.

Top IBM PC Games for October 1991

The Software Publishers Association has retained PC Research, a market research firm in Reston, Virginia, to compile the monthly lists of top-selling software, based on sales data from Babbages, Electronics Boutique, Software Etc. and Waldensoftware. Below are the first Hit Lists of data under the new arrangement.

Top 10 IBM PC Entertainment Software

This Mo.	Title	Publisher
1.	*Police Quest III*	Sierra On-Line
2.	*Leisure Suit Larry V*	Sierra On-Line
3.	*F-117A Stealth Fighter 2.0*	MicroProse
4.	*Gunship 2000*	MicroProse
5.	*Wing Commander II*	Origin
6.	*Earl Weaver 2.0*	Electronic Arts
7.	*Adventures of Willy Beamish*	Sierra On-Line
8.	*King's Quest V*	Sierra On-Line
9.	*Might & Magic III*	New World Computing
10.	*Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe*	Lucasfilm

Top 10 IBM PC Home Education Software

This Mo.	Title	Publisher
1.	*Where in the World Is Carmen Sandiego?*	Broderbund
2.	*Where in the USA Is Carmen Sandiego?*	Broderbund
3.	*New Math Blaster Plus*	Davidson
4.	*Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing*	Software Toolworks
5.	*Reader Rabbit II*	Learning Company
6.	*SimEarth*	Maxis
7.	*Where in America's Past Is Carmen Sandiego?*	Broderbund
8.	*Where in Time Is Carmen Sandiego?*	Broderbund
9.	*Algeblaster Plus*	Davidson
10.	*Treasure Mountain*	Learning Company

Top Coin-Ops for November 1991

The coin-op figures are courtesy of *Replay* magazine, and they are based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators. For the first time this month, the listing has been expanded to include the top "deluxe" coin-snatchers.

Best Upright Videos

1. *Captain America* by Data East
2. *Double Axle* by Taito
3. *Steel Gunner* by Namco
4. *Super High Impact* by Midway
5. *Dragon's Lair II* by Leland
6. *Sunset Riders* by Konami
7. *Space Gun* by Taito
8. *The Simpsons* by Konami
9. *Beast Busters* by SNK
10. *Indy Heat* by Leland

Best Coin-Op Software

1. *Street Fighter II* by Capcom
2. *Wrestlefest* by Technos
3. *Super Baseball 2020* by SNK
4. *Eightman* by SNK
5. *Karate Blazers* by McO'River
6. *Clutch Hitter* by Sega
7. *Vendetta* by Konami
8. *Crossed Swords* by SNK
9. *Burning Fight* by SNK
10. *Sengoku* by SNK

Best Deluxe Videos

1. *Steel Talons* by Atari
2. *Road Riot* by Atari
3. *Final Lap 2* by Namco
4. *Mad Dog McCree* by Betson/Icat
5. *Race Drivin'* by Atari
6. *GP Rider* by Sega
7. *Hard Drivin'* by Atari
8. *Galaxy Force* by Sega
9. *G-Loc* by Sega
10. *Cisco Heat* by Jaleco

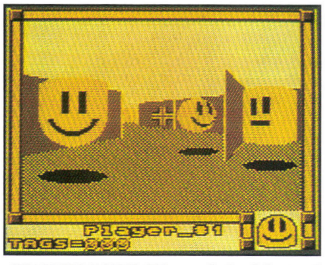
Best New Videos

1. *Spider-Man* by Sega
2. *Race Drivin' Pan* by Atari

Wipe the smile off this face!

(And maybe a few of your friends, too!)

Here's your chance to wipe the smiles off those annoying happy faces once and for all! In FaceBall 2000, "Have a Nice Day" takes on a whole new meaning— in first-person perspective, with 3D graphics and 360° maneuvering!



WATCH OUT! They only look happy!

Get into your Game Boy...

And we mean *into!* FaceBall 2000 is a new virtual reality game. You don't just *see* your character, you *are* your character. Feel like you're actually inside your Game Boy as you move through CyberScape's more than 70 treacherous mazes — or the Arena, in fast-paced rounds of high-tech combat.

Bring your friends along!

Sure. You can take on the Smiloids alone. But with your Game Link™ cable or Four Player Adapter, those faces can belong to your friends! Play one-on-one, two against two, or free-for-all!

More than four times the fun with the Four Player Adapter!

It pay$ to play together.

Don't miss your chance to get up to $5 back with our multiplayer rebate! You'll find all the info inside your FaceBall 2000 package when you open it up for the game of your life! But hurry. Some of your friends might be buying FaceBall 2000 right now. If they get in too much practice without you, the smile that gets wiped might be your own!

FACEBALL 2000

A whole new way to get into your Game Boy.

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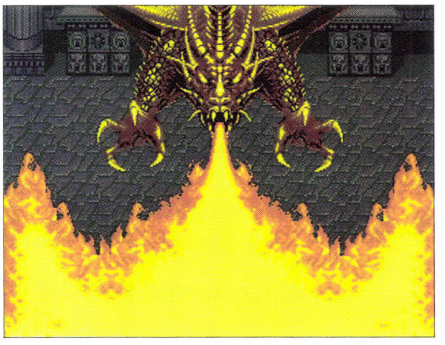
CIRCLE #115 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

BORIS©91

Golden Axe II.™ New and improved death, destruction and magic.



You've just escaped from the lava tunnel. A pack of razor-clawed creatures are trying to get you before the lizard men do. Suddenly the Warrior is slashing his way through a nasty gang of demons. He body slams one and gets two more with his sword. The Amazon does a backflip and tosses off an attacking Minotaur. Now the Dwarf is spinning on his battle axe, devastating several skeletons at once.

These are moves you've never seen before. The Warrior, Amazon and Dwarf are deadlier, stronger, more agile. Their enemies are more evil. And the magic is killer.

The Warrior summons the wind to blast an enemy. The Amazon strikes down a headless knight with scorching flames. The Dwarf commands huge boulders to flatten his foes. A fire-breathing dragon carries you toward the castle where Dark Guld is waiting to put out your lights.

Golden Axe™ was murder. This one's worse!

Golden Axe II is one of more than 150 hot games from Genesis. Including Sonic The Hedgehog,™ Toe Jam & Earl,™ Spider-Man™ and Joe Montana II SportsTalk Football.™ Genesis. The lowest price in true 16-bit video systems. The choice is simple. The choice is SEGA.™

SEGA GENESIS™

Leading the 16-bit revolution.™

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CIRCLE #116 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

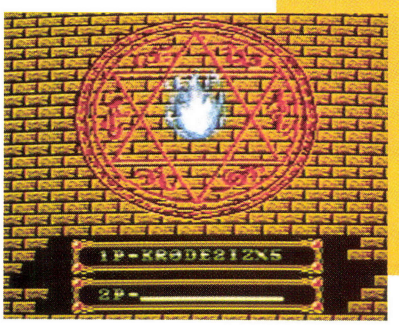
Tips are graded on a scale of one to five joysticks. The more joysticks that are colored in, the more valuable the hint.

Blow the dust off those old games, and try out some of our new hints! If you have some great hints and tips for us, just put them on a piece of paper, and send them to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, ATTN: Easter Egg Hunt. The author of each new tip we use will receive $10. Write neatly and be sure to include your name and address!

EASTER EGG HUNT

Here's a key to the abbreviations:

U = Up
D = Down
L = Left
R = Right
A = "A" button
B = "B" button
C = "C" button

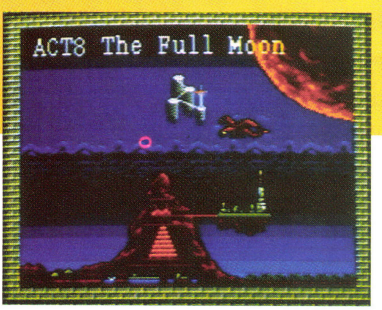


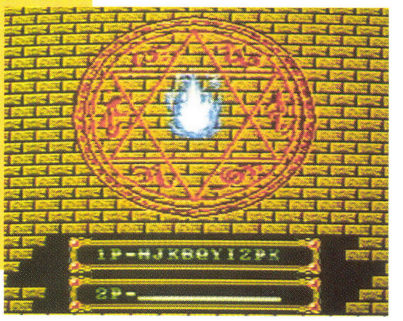
Arcus Odyssey

(Renovation Products for the Genesis)

Constantinos Tsatsanis, of Brooklyn, New York, was kind enough to send in this list of codes for all the characters in the game, to start at Act 8. Thanks, Constantinos.

JEDDA CHEF: KJCBHNIYXR
BEAD SHIRA: KR0DE2IZX5
DIANE FIREYA: IJXBU2JOHB
ERIN GASHUNA: HJKBQYIZPK





Chip's Challenge

(Atari for the Lynx)

Michael Kai, of Cerritos, California, has found the codes for the last four (hidden) levels in this game. Enter these codes:

146-JHEN
147-COZA
148-RGSK
149-DIGW

Thanks, Michael, for sending in these great Easter eggs.

Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure

(LJN for the Game Boy)

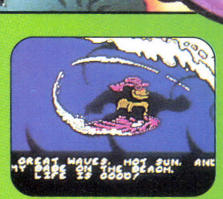
Jeremy Tripp, of Schaller, Iowa, has been busy getting codes for this Game Boy offering. Thanks, Jeremy.

Adventure 2: New Mexico 1879, 555-4239
Adventure 3: Ancient Greece 410 B.C., 555-6767
Adventure 4: Medieval England 1456, 555-8942
Adventure 5: San Dimas 1,000,000 B.C., 555-4118
Adventure 6: Shopping Mall, 555-8471
Adventure 7: School Room, 555-2989

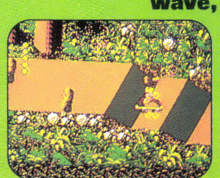
continued on page 32

GO APE!

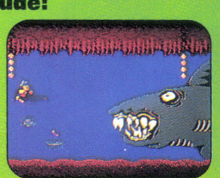
with THRILLA'S SURFARI™ for the NES™



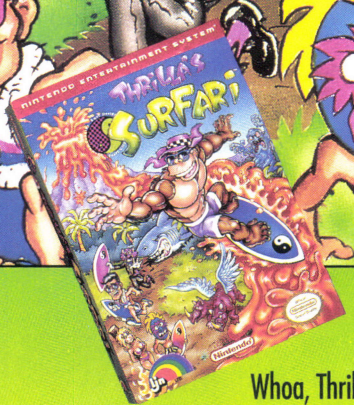
Catch the ultimate wave, dude!



Hand-plant your way through the wilds of Africa!



Watch out for big fish!



Whoa, Thrilla Gorilla! Bag your boards for the raddest surf and skate action ever!

The evil Wazula has taken your babe to Africa. Skip the curbs and quarter-pipes; gnarly jungles and bakin' deserts are the ultimate skate challenge...ever aerial over a crocodile? Killer volcanoes and mammoth waterfalls mean surfin' more hardcore than Maui!

The excitement rips, but Wazula's two-headed flying Rhino and a way-tough Lava Monster demand serious shreddin'! So carve, slash, and trash Wazula with THRILLA'S SURFARI for the NES™...before he makes a monkey out of you!

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CIRCLE #104 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

continued from page 30

RBI Baseball 3

(TENGEN FOR THE NES)

Tuong Phan, of San Francisco, California, has been busy playing the third installment of this great baseball game series. Here are three codes to the last game of the season against the super-team TE. Thanks, Tuong, for these great codes.

To play as Atlanta use: B9JLJWHT4
To play as Oakland use: H1HVPOJJ4
To play as San Francisco use: OGRTHUPJ4

Golvellius

(SEGA FOR THE SMS)

Shaun Christie, of Ucluelet, British Columbia, Canada, has found a great password. Just keep entering Sega until the last word, then spell it Segq. You'll start at the beginning of the game, but with the Legendary Sword, Ascent Boots, seven life potions, three crystals, Remedia's Shield, green and purple Mea, Aresta's Pendant, three rings from the wise women and 6,555,550 gold, which you'll lose almost immediately, ending up with 44,000. Thanks, Shaun.

SLIME WORLD

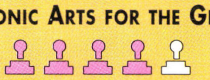
(ATARI FOR THE LYNX)

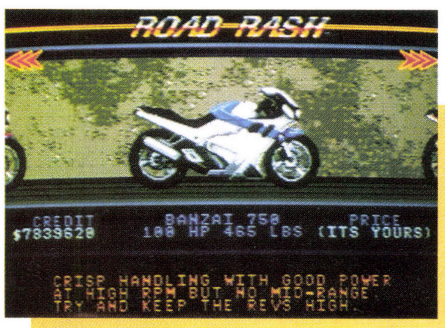
Go to the summary and search through the pages. When you see the one with Todd all green, press Option 1. Then press A and B to pop the "zit." Try it as a multiplayer game. This Easter egg was sent in by Greg George.

The code 4EB43535 will lock the Lynx up if you're inclined to do so. We can't find a good reason to do this, but....

Road Rash

(ELECTRONIC ARTS FOR THE GENESIS)





Chris Szarek, of Chicopee, Massachusetts, sent in this code that should start you on the fourth level with over $7 million in your credit account. Now you can buy any bike before any race to suit your needs and never have to worry about having enough money. Thanks, Chris, for sending this Easter egg.

34441 01MS0 NV8UC 3QR8R

continued on page 34

CADASH™

1 or 2 Player Action!
4 Different Characters!

Arise brave warriors, your skill is about to be tested! Baarogue the Destroyer has captured lovely princess Sarasa, and it is up to you to rescue her and defeat him.

Overwhelmed? Fear not, for this quest allows two brave souls to venture forth simultaneously via the TurboTap® !

Hurry, for Baarogue's power grows by the second and soon no one will be able to halt his advance!

The hit Taito arcade game is now available exclusively for the TurboGrafx™-16!

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CIRCLE #114 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

continued from page 32

Impossamole

(NEC FOR THE TG-16)

Here are some codes to start at the different scenes in the game. The first code will show that The Orient has been completed, followed by the Bermuda Triangle, Iceland and finishing with the Amazon Jungle. The number following the code indicates how many lives are remaining.

The Orient: WIIBYG5KGL8T - 3
Bermuda Triangle: IPSSYI5G28GB - 5
Iceland: GYTIYP592GGY - 1
Amazon Jungle: 9M2HYP5KG29V - 3

To begin play with the Bermuda Triangle complete and six lives, input:
JKBQYG5BGCNW

NES Play Action Football

(NINTENDO FOR THE NES)

Jon Schultz, of Watertown, Wisconsin, was nice enough to share some codes with us for the final game. Thanks, Jon.

Power Bowl Codes:
San Francisco: 0K50AJ7T0H
New York: B04GKVLLL8
Miami: AD1GANSUGT
Chicago: 1062MPCLBM
Denver: PKMORQ2G5M
Washington: 0GJHUI1KP9
Houston: H0J1UK1RCL
Los Angeles: HGLGIQ0T10

Turrican

(ACCOLADE FOR THE GENESIS)

To bring up a special option screen that will let you customize your game and start on any level, from the option screen, move the arrow to the bottom of the screen, then press and hold D. Now press A, B, B, A, B, A, A, B, A, A, B, A, A. If you don't get it the first time...try, try again.

FINAL FIGHT CODE

(CAPCOM FOR THE SNES)

Jack Teel, of Cupertino, California, has sent in a detailed list of what the different settings do in the special option screen for this game. Thanks, Jack.

To activate the option screen: Press the L button and the **START** button at the title screen.

Difficulty A

This sets the overall difficulty of game.

1..Lowest Difficulty to 8..Hardest Difficulty

Difficulty B

This sets the timer speed.

1..Lowest Speed to 4..Fastest Speed

Player

This sets the number of lives which the player has at the beginning of the game.

1....Lowest 9....Highest

Extend

This determines the point level at which the player will gain an extra life. There are four settings to choose from.

Music

This should change the background music.

This option does not work.

Sound

This should change the sound effects music.

This option does not work.

Stereo

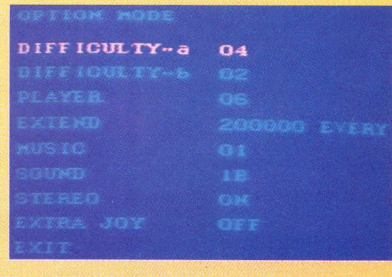
This option allows the player to change from Stereo to Mono sound.

Extra Joy

If this option is turned ON, it allows the player to use the A button to activate the Super Move. If the option is off, the player must push both B and Y buttons to activate the move.

Exit

This option allows the player to leave the option mode with the settings intact.



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T-800 DATA FILE/READ ONLY

1997: THOSE WHO SURVIVED THE THERMONUCLEAR DESTRUCTION CALLED IT JUDGMENT DAY...BUT THEY LIVED ONLY TO FACE A NEW NIGHTMARE: THE WAR AGAINST THE MACHINES.

2029: SKYNET, THE SUPER COMPUTER THAT CONTROLS THE MACHINES, SENDS A T-1000 TERMINATOR BACK THROUGH TIME. IT IS PROGRAMMED TO TERMINATE JOHN CONNOR BEFORE HE BECOMES THE LEADER OF THE RESISTANCE!

IF IT SUCCEEDS, HUMANITY IS HISTORY.

NO FATE BUT WHAT YOU MAKE ON NES™:
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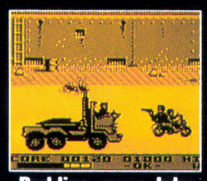
Destroy Skynet defenses in the future.



Red line young John Connor to safety!

Lend a hand to the Resistance—destroy the terminator endoskeleton.

FIGHT IN THE FUTURE...SAVE THE PAST ON GAME BOY®:
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The battle for tomorrow begins today...with you!

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Can you take the heat? Destroy the T-1000!

Save humanity and terminate the T-1000 with T2 on NES™ and Game Boy®. "Hasta la vista, Baby!"

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Contra III: The Alien Wars

KONAMI

For the Super NES (NA)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

The nuts-'n'-bolts of *Contra III: The Alien Wars,* in minimal phrasing: Bad aliens invade. Shoot bad aliens. Friend help. Jump and run. Get power-ups. Get better guns. Kill bigger, badder aliens. Don't die. In other words, ludicrous, manly butt-kicking continues as a staple in the 16-bit Nintendo realm.

There are six stages that have big boss enemies to blow away along with the usual army of troop fodder. The initial stage has two forts and an alien tank to destroy, napalm fire to avoid, a tank that your player can use and an alien that's a huge turtle which spits out larvae.

The playing perspective switches to an overhead view in the next stage. You maneuver your muscle-bound Contra guy through tattered highway streets. The objective is to take out all alien gun turrets, while blasting guards and centipede-like creatures in your way.

Here, the control pad is used very differently. Pressing the topmost right and left buttons rotates the entire screen, changing the direction your player faces. The directional cross moves him through the streets normally. Learning to handle these controls takes getting used to, but this stage is most fun to play once you learn how.

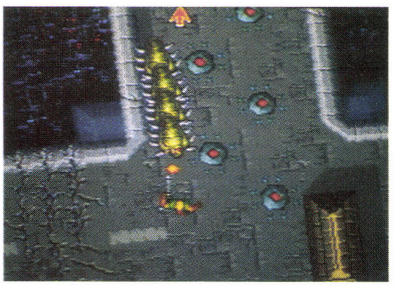
The last alien is unique and utilizes the Super NES's rotational scaling very well, a feature that has been used for fancy title screens all too often. It's a spinning, spiderlike creature that rises up in the air and comes crashing down upon your player.

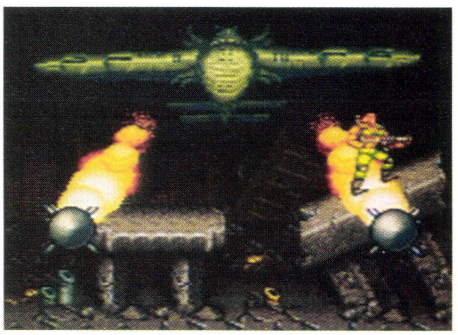
The third stage is set in a futuristic steel mill that's infested with winged alien pests. The screen scrolls vertically as well as horizontally, and, therefore, you and your friend's players have to climb upwards along structures. There are three aliens to destroy at the stage's end: A machine-gun-happy robot duo and, if you happen to blow up this pair, a giant robot that tears open the scene's back wall and spits fireballs and time bombs at you. Things get even rougher after this.

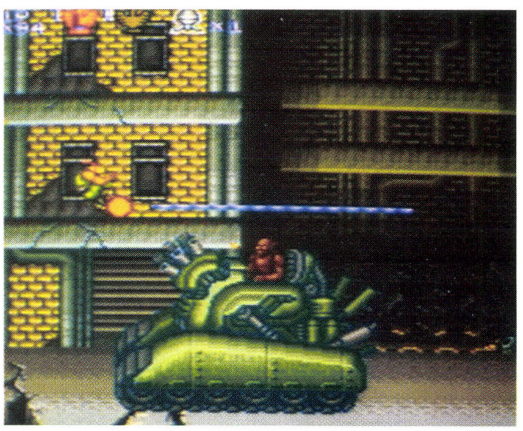
The next level starts with your player riding a jet motorcycle. Attacks come from ahead and above in the form of aliens on jet bikes, tanks, guys wearing jetpacks and a huge airship that looms overhead. Blowing up the final target is a hyper-intense challenge where your player rides missiles and must jump from one to another before they explode, all the while trying to keep aim and avoid getting shot.

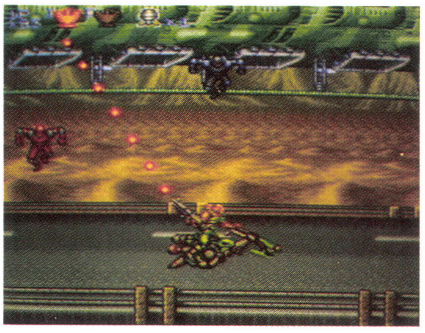
Things get even harder with the fifth stage, which takes place in a desert. But the hardest of the hard is the sixth and last one. Here, you travel through an eerie-looking cavern—shooting anything that moves or looks threatening, of course—to blow up the central core of the aliens' power. As an incentive to continue playing after you've finished the game once, there are three different endings.

With *Contra III: The Alien Wars,* Konami unleashes this successful series onto the 16-bit world, filling it with eerie backgrounds and gigantic, devilish boss characters.









In staying consistent with the previous *Contra* games, you'll face wave after wave of enemy creatures.

The game looks all right, definitely a lot better than some of the earlier SNES titles. The aliens at a stage's end are wickedly perverse looking. It makes you wonder what sort of twisted imagination it is that comes up with these.

Things become a little "cluttered" on the screen when multiple aliens attack, and this can make playing more difficult than it should be. No problematic slowdowns in player movement occur, though.

Contra III has real tough play and will provide a quick, no-brainer rush for most players, just as caffeine addicts need their first cups of morning coffee. *Contra III: The Alien Wars* is like gourmet coffee—it smells great and ought to satisfy the addicted.

—Howard H. Wen

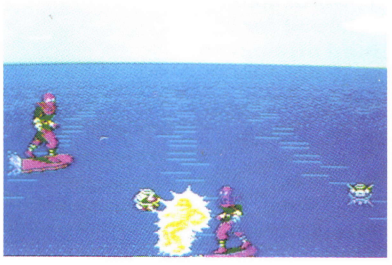
Konami
900 Deerfield Parkway
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089-4570
(708) 215-5100

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III: The Manhattan Project

KONAMI
For the Nintendo Entertainment System (NA)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

Cowabunga, dudes! Those awesome Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles are back for another action-packed adventure.



I'm one of those curmudgeons who was disappointed with Ultra's *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II*. Although the game was above average in playability, it seemed to lack the proper amount of turtleness—as if they'd simply taken your typical *Double Dragon* hero and painted him green. But I'm far more impressed with Konami's *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles III: The Manhattan Project*, which is more silly, more spectacular—and jes' plain more exciting than its predecessor.

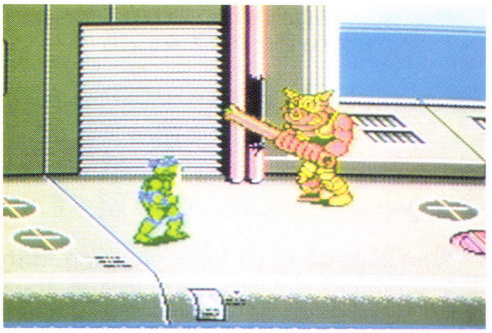
The suitably giddy premise: Your old nemesis, Shredder, has concocted his most vile scheme yet—he and his alien buddy, Krang, have airlifted Manhattan Island and are holding both the city and plucky journalist April O'Neil for ransom. So if you ever want to see April again—or save New York City, for that matter—you'd better get on it!

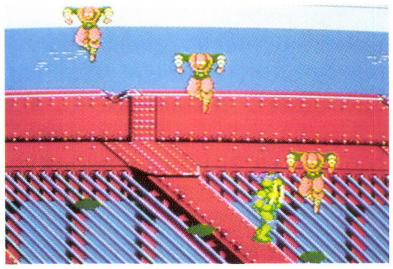
Our intrepid turtles are taking a well-deserved break on beautiful Fort Slaughterdale beach when the news reaches them. So the first two of *TMNT III*'s eight levels are spent just getting back to the Floating Apple. From there, they eventually make it to Krang's spaceship, but not before hitting the usual sewers and subways, bridges and towers, alleys and arenas.

Each of the turtles has an identical repertoire of ninja moves to use against the surging shredheads, plus a single unique attack that's devastating to your enemies, but which uses up a bit of that turtle's lifeline. There are more moves than in *TMNT II*, including a particularly effective "jab-and-toss" in which you quickly skewer your foe on the tip of your weapon and then toss him/her/it back over your head. The special attacks are fun to use; when you're down to one li'l notch in your lifeline, you can use 'em all you want and greatly extend the useful life of your turtle.

TMNT III offers three gaming modes: a single-player and two two-player modes. In the easier of the two-player modes, you can't accidentally inflict damage on your compadre.

There's an immense variety of excellent graphics and backgrounds, the kind of stuff you usually only see in 16-bit games: multilevel scrolling, large figures, transitional screens, panning in all directions, screen shaking and more. There are smaller, more subtle details, too: Try letting your turtle rest for a few seconds without moving him or watch his expression when he gets burnt to a crisp by close exposure to cannon fire. But be warned:





The NES is being pushed to its limits here. There's a fair amount of flickering; in two-player mode, the problem is more pronounced. At times, only half of your character is even visible. There are also slowdowns at times.

TMNT III: The Manhattan Project features an immense variety of excellent graphics and backgrounds.

The sound is likewise improved over *TMNT II*; each level has its own fast-paced theme. The variety of sound effects is small, but they've got sufficient "oomph" and come fast and furiously, so the net result is rewarding. There are digitized grunts and groans, and the game kicks off with a sampled war cry (you know the one) just so there's no mistaking whose territory you're in.

Basically, we're looking at the best Turtles game by far. Aside from the flickering and slowdowns, the only serious drawback is length. There are three continues, which enabled me to get through the fourth level the first time I played—that's halfway! But the succeeding levels are tough enough to bring a screeching halt to that kind of progress. Still, expert players are bound to bring the game to its knees in short order. That said, this is still one of the most ambitious and playable of the NES ninja games.

And hey, I made it through the whole review without once saying, "Cowabunga, dudes!" Whoops.

—Josh Mandel

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Wizards & Warriors III—Kuros: Visions of Power

ACCLAIM

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($47.95)

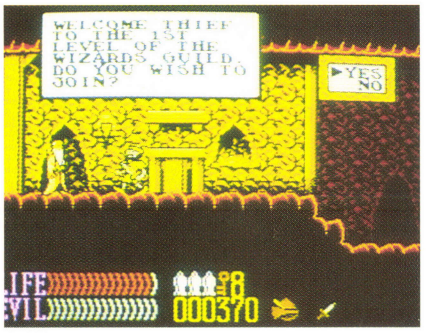
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

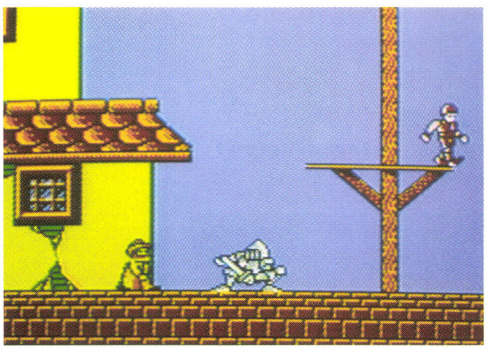
Who says we don't learn anything from video games? Among other things, they teach us that evil never dies; it just waits patiently for a sequel. This is demonstrated in Acclaim's latest installment of one of its most popular series: *Wizards & Warriors III—Kuros: Visions of Power*. Acclaim has made it the most devious and challenging chapter yet. This is truly a game for expert-level *W&W* players.

Remember at the end of *W&W II* how you defeated the evil wizard Malkil? Well, naturally, you just *thought* you defeated him—but you really only weakened him and sent him scurrying. His black spirit (actually more of a giant, green tadpole, but why be literal?) escaped and recuperated in the kingdom of Piedup, where he eventually took human form and wrested power from good King James, now in forced retirement. Now, you, Kuros, have found your way to Piedup, and the town just ain't big enough for the two of you.

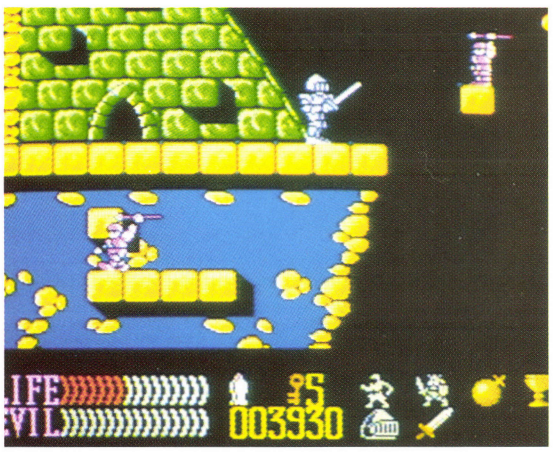
W&W III has the usual running, jumping and slashing, but it has much more than that. In order to reach your final goal of defeating Malkil once and for all (maybe), you'll have to learn to be a jack-of-all-trades: knight, wizard and thief. Fortunately, Piedup has three guilds, each of which will train you in one of those fields, provided you satisfy their stringent admission goals. This means retrieving objects and passing arcade-style tests. These tests are the toughest and most infuriating I've ever attempted on a cart. They're not complicated and they're not lengthy, they simply call for extraordinary precision and timing. It's a zen thing. If you think you're going to blow it, you almost certainly will. If you think you're going to succeed, you'll still probably blow it. But eventually, with *lots* of practice, you do make it. It's a

continued on page 42





Kuros has returned for his third attempt to beat the ever-persistent Malkil in Acclaim's *Wizards & Warriors III—Kuros: Visions of Power*.



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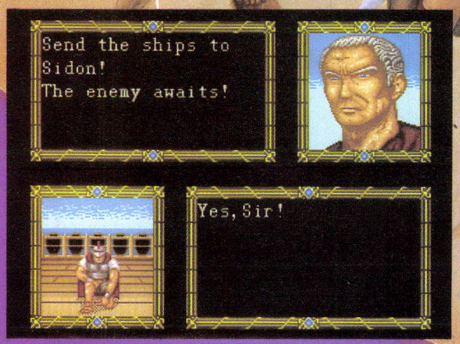

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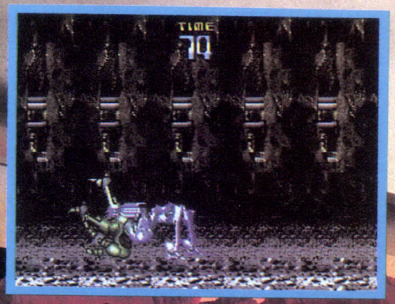

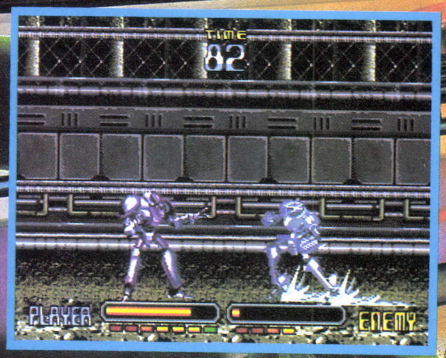

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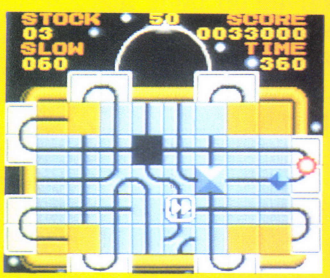

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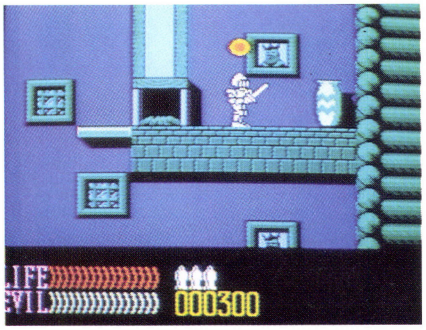

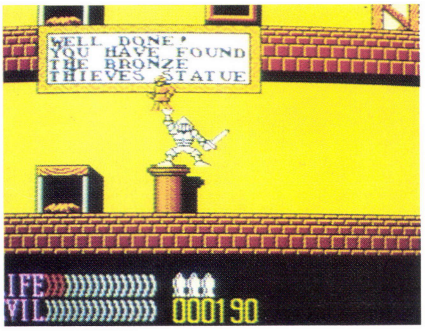

***W&W III* is an extraordinarily demanding contest with unpretentious and solid game design.**

long, arduous process, but also a rewarding one.

Progressing involves changing from one role to another at the right times. By switching between wizard, thief and knight, you can most effectively battle (or bypass) the enemies Malkil has thrown in your path. You can reach different levels of proficiency in each skill (requiring a new test!), and with each new level comes new skills and abilities. The result is a game that nicely blends role playing with arcade. While the overall emphasis is action, the RPG elements require strategy and experimentation.

Which brings us to what makes this game so truly difficult: There is no save feature, no password feature and not a single continue. And because it's a long adventure, you must simply learn to do everything perfectly. This is why the game is really not suitable for casual players, beginners or amateurs. This is the game you conquer after many days or weeks of practice, and then use to impress the pants off of those poor unfortunates who grab the joystick, say "Let me play that!" and then die within seconds.

The game's simplistic cartoon graphics are reminiscent of the *Mega Man* series. The animation is decent and, at times, better than that, but the visuals basically will not excite anybody. Sound effects are pretty good and plentiful. The music's okay, too; it's constantly varied in new areas and rooms so as not to become too repetitious.

Conclusion: An unpretentious and solid game design made extraordinarily demanding by the lack of a save feature. Players who pride themselves on their incredible talent and patience will be severely tested by *W&W III*. But that's the idea, isn't it? This is your third time around; you *should* be the best by now!

—J.M.

Acclaim Entertainment
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Oyster Bay, NY 11771
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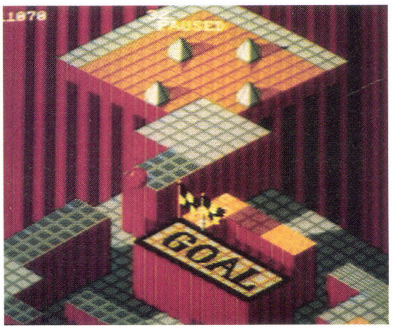

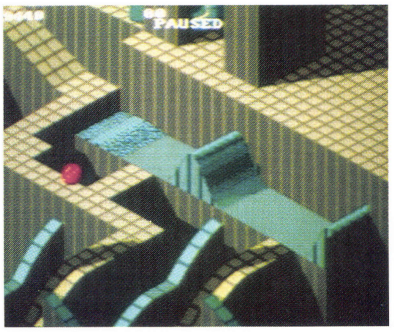

Conceptually simple, yet hard to master, *Marble Madness* is a skill game that becomes progressively more difficult as you pass from maze to maze.

Marble Madness

ELECTRONIC ARTS
For the Sega Genesis ($39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

I doubt that there could be any plans afoot to release a trackball peripheral for the Sega Genesis. But if there was such a controller for this system, you'd be able to play a nearly perfect version of one of the most unique arcade titles of the '80s right in your own home. Even when played with a control pad, the Genesis version of *Marble Madness* is a fine example of the type of contest that helped to bridge the gap between the first wave of video-game hysteria and the current one.

The object of this deceptively simple game of skill is to maneuver a marble through a series of labyrinths that get progressively tougher as you advance through the game. The mazes are shown in three-quarter perspective, and you can be sure that the twists, turns, ramps, obstacles and pitfalls that appeared in the original are still intact. There's a timer at the top of the screen that will end the game if it reaches zero, but if you finish a maze with time remaining, those precious seconds are carried forward and added to the timer before the next maze starts.

Effective time management is the key to success at *Marble Madness*. It's impossible to clear the later stages using only the ten or 15 seconds that the timer gives you to work with, so it's important to really smoke on the easier mazes and build up some time in reserve.

Overall, the game isn't very deep. I would have preferred a much longer series of mazes that would allow more time to get used to the controls before tak-

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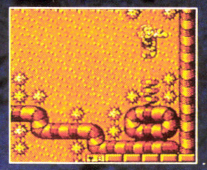
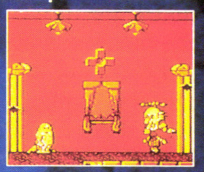
Flying cups and saucers and clothes that spring to life cause quite a panic... especially when they're coming for you! It's a horrific 5 level challenge to spook attic ghastlies, rattle angry skeletons and scare ghostly bats. Vampires may even join you for a "bite" to eat. Hmm...maybe we should skip lunch today.

These Neitherworld ghoul-o-ramas are no match for us. Has the "ghost with the most" ever let you down?!!

Graveyard Mix-up!



Neitherworld Pogosnake!



Funny face scare-off!

Check out the "GHOST WITH THE MOST" for your NES™ too!

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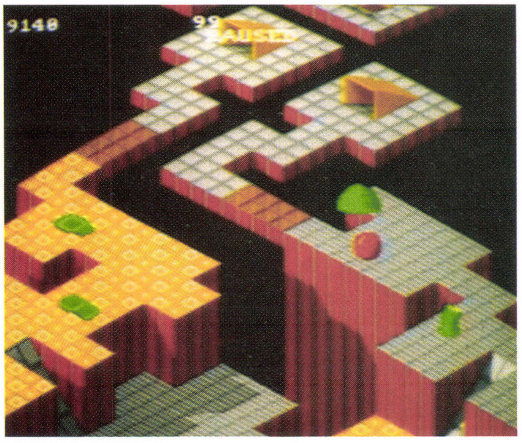
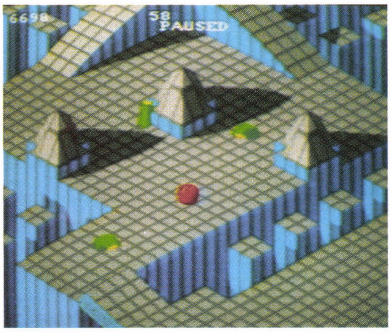
CIRCLE #104 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

ing on the really tough levels. But the main reason for the game's current structure is strict adherence to the subtleties of the coin-op original—and that's not necessarily a bad thing when the conversion is as good as this one is.

Actually, there are a number of earlier versions of the game for different systems that had basically nailed down the game play. Perhaps most notably, the NES version was surprisingly faithful to its arcade roots. But the thing that really sets this one apart from all previous versions of *Marble Madness* is the excellence of the graphics and sounds. With all of the odd-looking machinery and echoing background tunes, most of the mazes look like enemy hideouts from episodes of the *Batman* TV show. For more wacky fun, the two-player-simultaneous mode even allows you to knock the other player's marble off the playfield.





On your way to the goal line, watch out for *Marble Madness'* bevy of creepy-crawlies—slithering acid puddles and hungry worms among them.

I'm surprised that nobody ever made a big deal about the fact that the Genesis (and Master System) control pads use the same connectors that the old Atari 2600 joysticks used. Since the systems "read" both types of controllers in pretty much the same way, I thought I could hook up my old Atari trackball for some real, honest-to-goodness *Marble Madness* action.

Lo and behold, it really works! It's not velocity-sensitive—that is, rolling the ball faster doesn't make the on-screen marble move any faster—but it is a step closer to the real thing. Now, if I could only get my hands on a *lighted* trackball....

All kidding aside, EA's *Marble Madness* is a fine translation of a title that's destined for the Video Game Hall of Fame.

—Chris Bieniek

Electronic Arts
1450 Fashion Island Blvd.
San Mateo, CA 94404
(415) 572-ARTS

Mega Man 4

CAPCOM

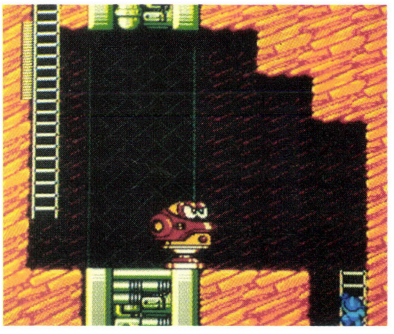
For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($54.95)

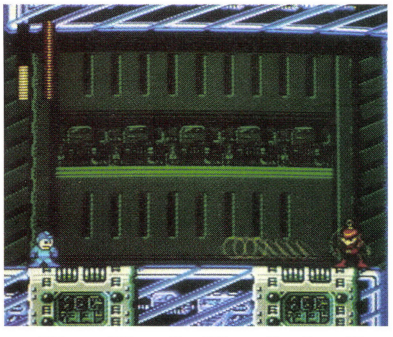
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

When a game sells well, you do a sequel. This formula has certainly worked for Capcom, which started the enormously popular *Mega Man* series some years ago and has brought out *Mega Man 2*, *3* and now *4*. But where some sequels are tired revisitings of earlier glory, the *Mega Man* series has always had something new and fresh with each release. *Mega Man 4* continues that tradition, with what is probably the best of the series.

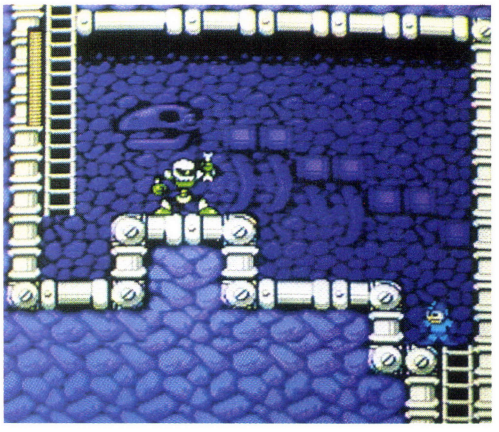
Part of *Mega Man 4* will look very familiar to *Mega Man* enthusiasts. The opening screen allows the player to choose the nemesis he wants to do battle with. There are eight in all, with names like Ring Man, Toad Man, Bright Man, Drill Man and Dust Man. These enemies, as well as a whole host of other robotic inhabitants of *Mega Man 4*, are the creations of a certain Dr. Cossack. The avowed purpose of each, of course, is to destroy Mega Man.

The basic play-mechanic is to navigate Mega Man through an obstacle-filled world. As with earlier entries, the view is from the side. Mega Man can jump and shoot left or right, and it's often necessary to combine both these talents to take out enemies that approach at strange and difficult angles. There are also power-ups and additional energy to be found along the way. Pressing the **START** button takes the player to a secondary screen, where alternate weapons can be chosen. Mega Man can gain access to areas that he couldn't reach otherwise by getting a little help from his





***Mega Man 4* will undoubtedly be as popular as its previous incarnations, thanks to its comfortable game play.**



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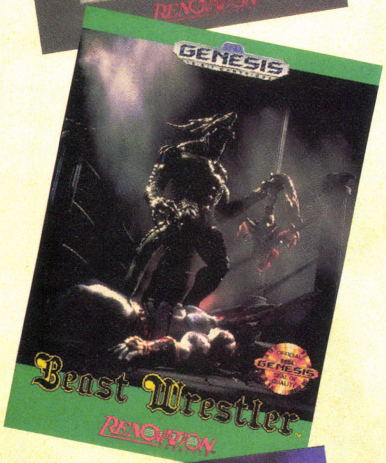

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dog Rush. This amazing creature can become a spring for high jumps, a sub or a jet plane.

Mega Man 4 is a carefully crafted game. Not only are the graphics sharp and colorful, but the animation is, in a word, clever. For example, when you shoot Skull Man, he collapses in a pile of bones. After a while, he gets up again, but before he can come after you, he must screw on his head. The whole effect is hilarious. And be sure not to miss the mechanical grasshoppers and the missile-launching hippos.

The sound is another plus. The metallic clanks of the robots, the explosions and the swish of weapons are all very well done.

The game is also quite playable. Although it is possible to take on any level from the entry screen, it is best to approach them in order, finding more powerful weapons and power-ups along the way. The difficulty level is fairly high, but it is not impossible. Unlike some other recent games, *Mega Man 4* doesn't leave you feeling frustrated. There is a password system (a grid with little dots on it, consistent with previous *Mega Man* games) so that you are able to pick up where you left off after your last "continue." Unfortunately, getting killed in a level means you have to go back to the beginning of that level.

It takes quite a bit of doing to keep a game series alive for four episodes—not including the Game Boy *Mega Man*—but Capcom has definitely come up with a "keeper" with *Mega Man 4*.

—Dave Plotkin

Capcom
3303 Scott Blvd.
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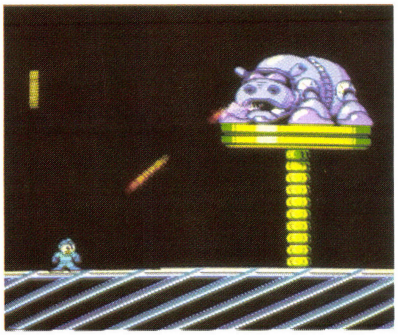
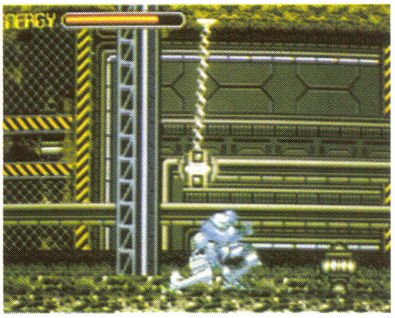
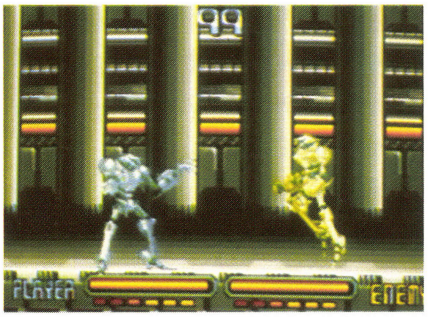
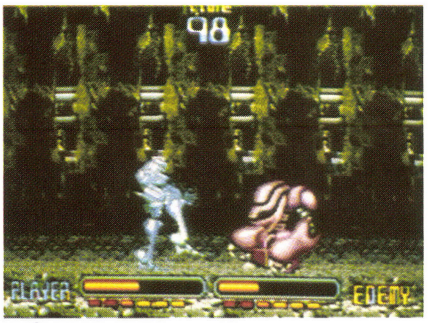


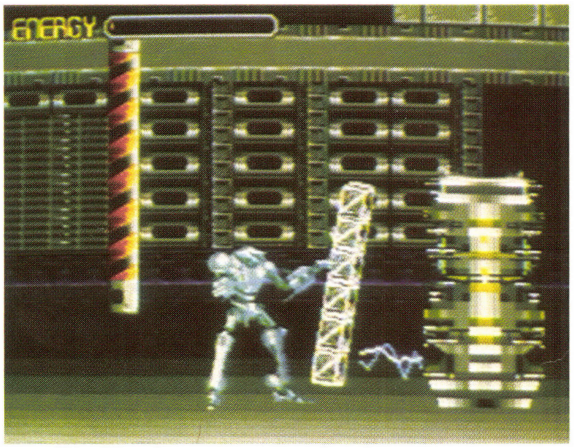
As with previous *Mega Man* contests, *Mega Man 4* brings on a new set of adversaries for our intrepid blue-suited hero to face off against.

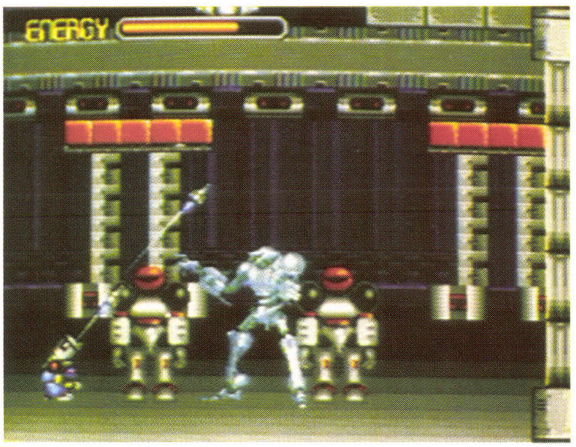






In a merging of *Veigues Tactical Gladiator* and *Double Dragon, Heavy Nova* offers you a martial-arts robot to control through increasingly difficult levels.





Heavy Nova

BIGNET

For the Sega Genesis ($59.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10

Following in the footsteps of such popular fighting games as *Double Dragon*, *Heavy Nova* puts you in the boots of a powerful battle robot with which you must fight your way through a labyrinth of corridors. Because each level is infested with devices and robotlike machines yearning to blast you into scrap metal, you must quickly develop battle-master skills if you expect to complete your mission. Using your control pad, you must advance your robot through each scene, punching, kicking and flying as you struggle to survive.

When you start the game, your robot has limited abilities. Specifically, he can perform only simple kicks and jabs, as well as blast himself upward with his jet-packs. Obviously, then, the first enemies you must face can be dispatched quickly and easily, usually with a swift kick. As you progress, though, you'll take on tougher and tougher foes. Luckily, you'll

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find level-ups that increase your robot's power and give him extra abilities.

Some moves your robot can learn include jabs, body blows, uppercuts, hammer knuckles, jump kicks, pile drivers, knee trips and back drops. You can always kick and punch (unless you're too weak), but if you're in just the right position, your robot can perform more devastating moves, such as the pile drivers and back drops. Unfortunately, other than the usual punches and kicks, getting your robot to perform a specific type of attack seems more a matter of luck than skill.

Each level contains plenty of obstacles designed to slow your mission. Laser beams blast down from the ceilings, land mines explode under your feet, boulders tumble from above, deadly pendulums block your path and robot attackers do their darndest to drain your robot's power. Some obstacles are more subtle. For example, you may have to kick the right place to uncover a level's exit or to turn off some dastardly device.

After completing a level, you must take on a boss robot. Needless to say, these fights require that your battle skills be at their peak. During these scenes, the game's extraordinary animations are used to full effect, with your robot leaping to his feet like an acrobat when he gets knocked down, or dragging himself sluggishly up from the floor when he's weak. To add a little realism to the game, a weakened robot can no longer fight and is at his enemy's mercy—unless he can stay out of the way long enough to recover some of his faculties.

Although *Heavy Nova*'s description may sound hot, the game's animation sequences are its only real strength. In spite of *Heavy Nova*'s focus on action, the game quickly becomes repetitive. Most obstacles and enemies are stock action stuff, with little creativeness used in their design. Moreover, the game control is frustratingly sluggish, and sometimes seems to take on a mind of its own. Forget any quick turns; if you end up with your back facing the enemy, you'll probably get plastered.

In summary, *Heavy Nova* is a so-so action contest that may please die-hard fight fans who're looking for the next *Double Dragon*. For most players, though, *Heavy Nova* will quickly lose its shine.

—Clayton Walnum

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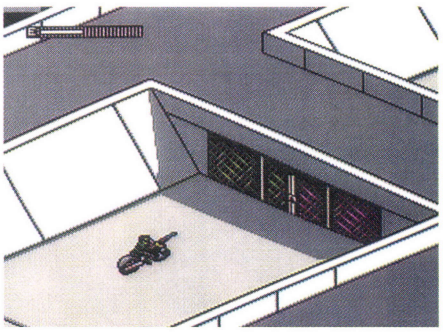
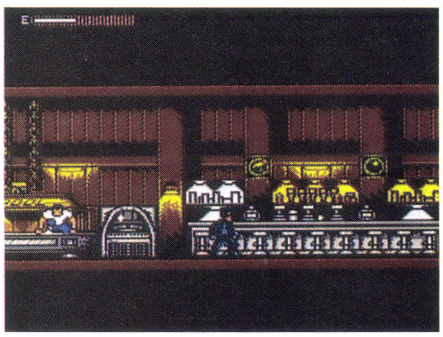




Where's Arnold when you need him? He's locked in mortal combat with the seemingly immortal T-1000 in LJN's *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* for the NES.

Terminator 2: Judgment Day

LJN

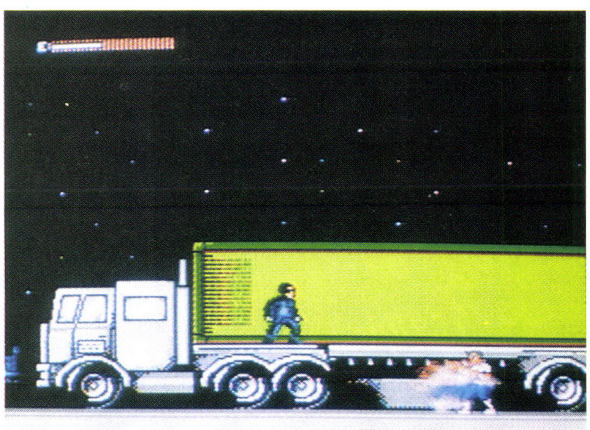
For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($47.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

Send a T-800 model Terminator back into the past to *protect* people? Not what you might expect after what the first time-traveling Terminator attempted. This time around, however, the good guys have control of its programming. It will take all of your abilities to use this flesh-clad pseudo-person to protect John Connor and his mother from the latest prototype model fresh out of the Cyberdyne Systems laboratories—the T-1000 Terminator. The game follows the story line of the movie closely, though it does embellish a bit in some parts for playability's sake.

After a brief introduction to give some details from the story line, it's time for your first order of business—clothing. Unfortunately, time traveling must be done in the nude, and even Terminators can be a bit bashful about streaking through the city in the buff. A nearby truck stop seems the perfect place to pick up some duds, but first you must fight off a few unfriendly locals in the parking lot. (It seems strange that, while you're fighting your way into the truck stop to get clothing, your on-screen character is already fully dressed. I suppose a naked Terminator would be a bit too much for some people.) Now you're ready to proceed with your mission objective.

While cruising the streets on your "borrowed" Harley, you spot John Connor riding his bicycle through a drainage canal. Unfortunately, the T-



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Best 30 Individual Stats

Batting Stats											
AVG	AB	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	BB	SO	SAC*	ERR	SB

Pitching Stats									
ERA	W	L	SV	CG	SHO	H	HR	R	BB	SO

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GAMES	5, 30, 60 AND 165 GAME SEASONS TO CHOOSE FROM.
NUMBER OF PLAYERS	1~6 PLAYERS CAN COMPETE YOU CAN LET THE COMPUTER PLAY THE GAME TOO.
INNINGS	1, 3, 5 AND 9 INNINGS TO CHOOSE FROM.
TEAMS	24 TEAMS
BASEBALL PLAYERS	432 PLAYERS IN ALL.
STATS	DURING THE SEASON, THE RANKINGS, W-L, PCT, GB, NUMBERS OF GAMES, AND SCHEDULE CAN BE SEEN AT ANYTIME.
TEAM STATS	THE BATTING STATS ON 8 ITEMS AND PITCHING STATS ON 10 ITEMS.
PLAYER'S STATS	THE BATTING AND PITCHING STATS OF 108 PLAYERS ARE DISPLAYED. THE LIST OF THE BEST 30 PLAYERS OF EACH CATEGORY CAN BE SEEN AS WELL.
STADIUMS	THERE ARE 6 FRANCHISE STADIUMS. YOU CAN ALSO PLAY THE WHOLE SEASON IN ONE STADIUM.
AUTO SETTING	EDIT YOUR ORIGINAL TEAM AND LET THE COMPUTER PLAY.
MANAGER MODE	THE MANAGER CAN SEND SIGNALS TO THE PLAYERS.
FAST PROCESSING	YOU CAN VIEW THE QUICK AUTO GAME RESULT.
EDIT	YOU CAN EDIT THE TEAMS, PITCHERS, AND BATTERS.
FIELDING	YOU CAN CONTROL EACH FIELDER, OR MOVE THEM ALL TOGETHER TO THE RIGHT, LEFT, CLOSE IN, AND FURTHER AWAY.
LEVEL	THERE ARE 3 COMPUTER LEVELS; STANDARD, ADVANCED, AND EXPERT MODES.
CHARACTER OF PITCHERS	EACH PITCHER HAS DIFFERENT CHARACTERISTICS.
TEAM COLOR	YOU CAN CHOOSE THE COLOR OF THE UNIFORMS AND T-SHIRTS.
ULTRA POINTS	YOU CAN SET THE AMOUNT OF ULTRA POINTS BEFORE PLAY.
DISPLAY	THERE IS OPTION OF ON-SCREEN DISPLAY OF WHICH ULTRA PLAYS YOU CAN USE.
ULTRA PLAYS	39 DIFFERENT ULTRA PLAY ABILITIES.
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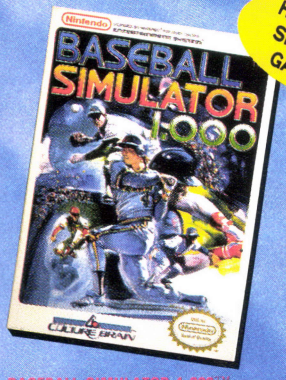

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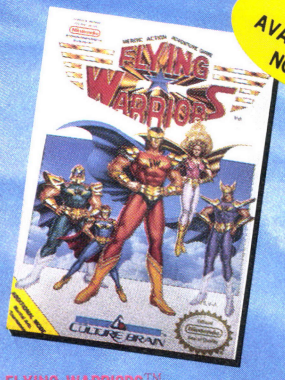

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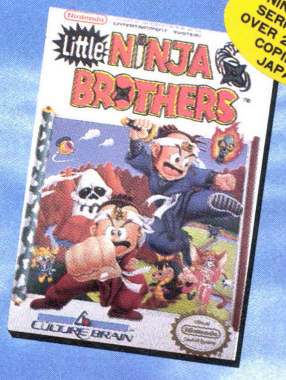

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1000 has also spotted him and is chasing him down in an 18-wheeler. You must simultaneously drive full speed through the canal, blasting gates open and other obstacles out of your way, while trying to avoid being crushed by the T-1000 as he barrels along behind you. Catch up with John Connor, and you will have escaped the T-1000...for now.

Once John realizes that you aren't out to kill him, he instructs you to stop killing people. Not exactly an easy thing for a machine that was designed solely for that purpose, but what John commands, you obey.

From this point on, you have to be a bit more careful when you take out the humans along the way. Instead of shooting them full in the chest, you gotta kneel down and blow their kneecaps out instead. Not a very pleasant experience, but at least you stand less chance of killing them that way.

Next stop is the asylum where Sarah Connor is being held. It is up to you to rescue her and escape before the T-1000 finds her and replaces her to wait in ambush for John. You must search through several floors and many rooms, avoiding the hospital guards and the T-1000 as you go.

Rescue Sarah, and it's off to the Cyberdyne facility to finish the job that Sarah was locked up for attempting—destroying Cyberdyne systems and all evidence of the previous Terminator. Here, you must travel through several rooms on the six floors of the facility, gathering explosive barrels and taking them up to a collection point. After obtaining all of them, you must distribute them across the top floor, and get out of the building before it is blown sky-high.

The Connors are with you, and Cyberdyne is history. Now your final, and perhaps most difficult, task lies before you—destroying the T-1000 Terminator. He is constructed of a mimetic polyalloy, or liquid metal, so punches and bullets have little effect on even slowing him down, much less stopping him. A nearby steel mill may be the best way to take him out for good, otherwise the hopes for mankind's future may yet be destroyed.

To accomplish all of these objectives, you start with what amounts to five lives. If your energy indicator is drained completely, your CPU shuts down for a bit—five shutdowns equal death for you and the mission. It's harder to simply wound the enemies before you than it is to kill them, and, occasionally, even a Terminator may use a bit too much force. Each human killed subtracts from the points that are tallied at the end of the round, so keep your killer instincts under control when possible.

Terminator 2 has some excellent graphics in the form of very good representations of the main characters from the movie: the endoskeleton of the T-800, the T-1000 and the Connors. All of the backgrounds also look great, and the game flows along in the same fast-paced way as the movie.

Sound effects and background music are equally acceptable. I found the game fairly challenging, and it should hold up to repeated play rather well. I came close to completing it, but didn't quite figure out how to take out the T-1000, though I'm sure to keep trying. The overall effect is a very polished and nice-looking game that is both faithful to the story line of the movie and an interesting game to play.

—Brent Walker

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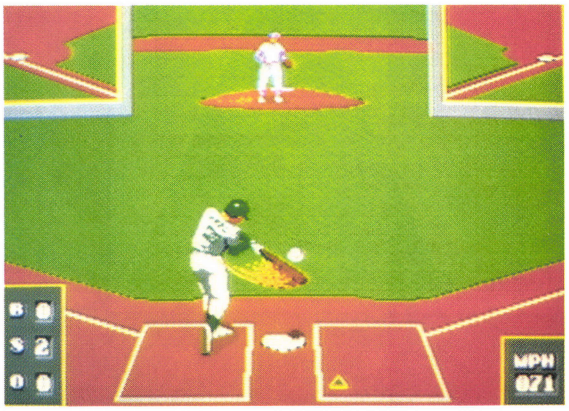
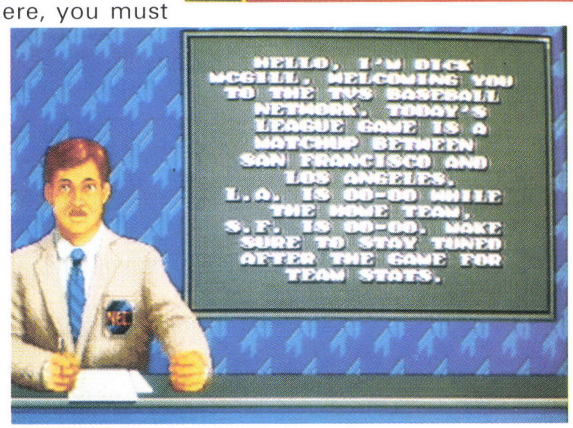




The fourth entry in the *TV Sports* series of games for the TurboGrafx-16, *TV Sports: Baseball* provides more than just athletics by throwing in a commentator as well.

TV Sports: Baseball

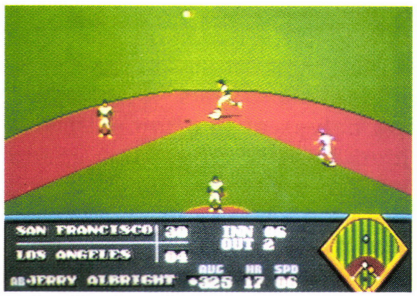
NEC

For the TurboGrafx-16 ($51.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

The fourth *TV Sports* title to be released for the TurboGrafx-16, *TV Sports: Baseball* carries on the series' tradition of realistic graphics and flexible multiplayer options.

In a league of eight teams and two divisional All-Star clubs, players can wade through an entire password-backed season or just play an exhibition game in their choice of three different ballparks. Incidentally, I never really understood why none of the *TV Sports* titles have made much more than a token attempt to mimic the type of presentation that sports fans are used to seeing when they watch a real game on TV. The baseball game is no exception—it uses "camera angles" that are nothing like the ones used by real TV crews, and there are no close-ups, instant



The strongest aspect of *TV Sports: Baseball* is the multiplayer capability, offering up to two-on-two competition.

replays or crowd scenes to add variety to the "look" of the game.

Aside from any expectations that may or may not be conjured up by its title, *TV Sports: Baseball* has a number of outstanding features that are very nearly counterbalanced by the weight of its flaws. The character animation is outstanding, particularly that of the pitcher and the batter. Unfortunately, the fielders are far too slow—if the ball isn't hit directly to a specific player, it can be incredibly tough to snare even the laziest of pop-ups.

The pitching controls are pretty flexible. A small arrow moves back and forth behind the plate to show the ball's original target, and from that starting point you can set the speed of the pitch and curve it to the left or right. But you can't really adjust the height of each pitch; they all come in about as high as the batter's belt buckle.

The resounding "crack!" when the batter connects is very impressive—you can practically hear the grain of the wood biting into the horsehide—and there's a real-sounding ballpark organ that plays a six-note "charge!" each time a runner scores. Other than these two bright spots, the sound is flat. The jittery music is too futuristic for a good old-fashioned sport like baseball, and the ridiculously exaggerated snarl of the umpire is less than convincing.

Of course, the multiplayer options make up for many of the game's shortcomings. Up to four players can participate, with up to two gamers on each team. When two players control the same team, one controller handles the pitching duties while the other moves all the fielders. The teammates also get to take turns at the plate. It's fun to cooperate against a common foe, and I really started to get the hang of the game when I was freed up to concentrate on my pitching skills this way.

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While we're on the subject, this might be the appropriate time for a tip of the hat to the good people at Cinemaware, who created the *TV Sports* series and provided the computer-gaming culture with a lot of unique, entertaining software. It's my understanding that Cinemaware ceased to exist somewhere around the time that *TV Sports: Basketball* was released, but NEC commissioned some of the folks who were already working on the hockey game to stick around until *TV Sports: Baseball* was finished.

Ironically, after witnessing the game's curious flaws, omissions and occasional disregard for realistic detail, I'd have to say that it *still* isn't finished. Let's give this one a conditional recommendation: If you're really into the kind of interaction that a four-player game can provide, you'll probably be able to find this cloud's silver lining. Just don't expect anything revolutionary.

—C.B.

NEC Technologies
1255 Michael Drive
Wood Dale, IL 60191
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Rings of Power

ELECTRONIC ARTS
For the Sega Genesis ($59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

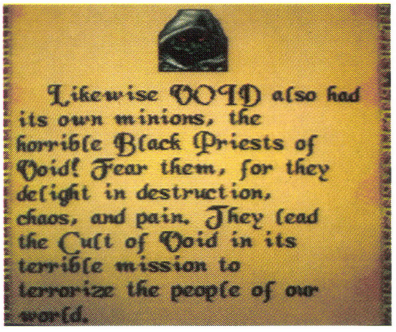
Thanks in part to Electronic Arts, the Genesis is an elephant burial ground for fantasy role-playing games. But, hey, that's great if you can't get enough of this stuff and dig doing your English lilt at the local Renaissance festival.

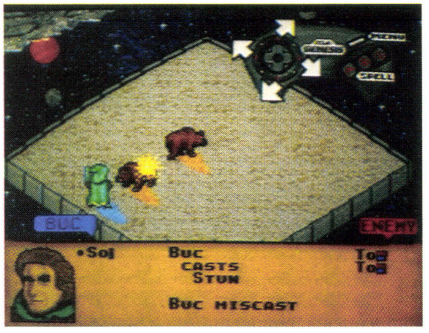
Rings follows in the tradition of the *Ultima* series. Its main selling point is that the graphics are rendered in the current, hip-and-happening look for strategy games—isometric topography with cute little people scampering about. It's *Ultima* with the look of *Populous*! Cool.

Then there's the back story from the Tolkien assembly line. The World is Ushka Bau. The Good Force is Nexus, who brought about a "Golden Age" using a Sacred Object, the Rod of Creation. Void, the Bad Force, fought with Nexus over the Rod. The Rod broke, and Void took half. Thus, the "Cataclysm" began "a rein of terror lasting 66 years." Bummer.

The halves of the Rod were further divided into 11 rings and scattered throughout the world. Generations later, their existence is considered a myth. And—well, you get the idea—you're this sorcerer's apprentice, Buc, who rounds up a party to trek out and find the rings so that the good times will come rocking again to Ushka Bau.

Electronic Arts' *Rings of Power* is an engrossing role-playing game that presents a lot of intriguing adventure.





Moving Buc along the terrain, you enter various buildings. Inside, you undertake the usual stuff: procuring munitions, getting sleep, talking to the townsfolk, finding important stuff to take and so on. While outside, you can "zoom" in on where Buc stands and maneuver him through a larger, more detailed depiction of the spot to look for items.

Let's not forget the fighting. You can engage in conflict with virtually everyone, and that includes men, women and children. Other confrontations might not be of your own volition. Refuse to pay the tax collectors, and you'll be audited severely. And there are the wandering bears, dragons and other creatures to contend with.

The fights aren't directly under your control, but you can select spells for the

continued on page 56

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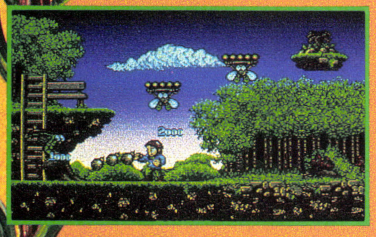
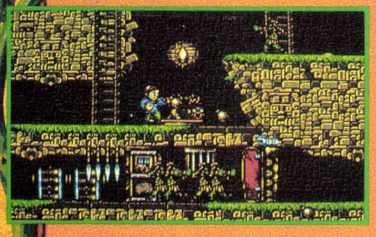
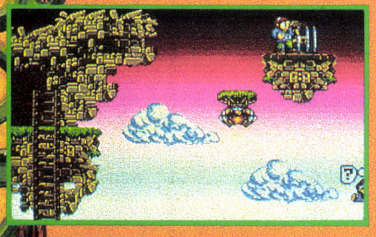
FOR THE AMIGA AND IBM PC







Screen shots shown are from the Amiga version of the game.

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continued from page 52

battle and the degree of aggressiveness or cautiousness for your character. Defeat the enemy, and Buc's experience level increases, and likely his money purse, too. If you can't bring down your opponent, it's best to try fleeing. Unless you've saved a game, death is absolute.

Yet most of the game is spent doing tasks to get what you need. You might search for an item so that a person will join your quest, as an example. Most individual tasks are not that hard to figure out. This isn't bad, as many of the missions themselves are interesting, though the dramatized scenarios do have their share of the genre's clichés.

Rings is an engrossing role-player with a world setting of daunting magnitude. Territory can be covered quickly if you buy a ship or boat for crossing waters, a flying dragon to soar over land or a dinosaur for quick on-the-ground travel.

What's wrong with *Rings* is the difficulty in player movement due to the diagonal controlling. An option switches things so that you hold the controller diagonally instead, and there's an "automatic" function to move Buc with the press of a button. But none of this helps. This lack of suitable controlling deflates the enjoyment real fast.

Another complaint: Does anyone really enjoy these "Scarborough Faire" themes that are piped from these role-players? It wouldn't be so bad in *Rings* had there been a music-off function that actually *worked*. The one available only shuts it off until you enter a building.

Regarding the game controlling, perhaps a point-and-click system might have worked better for moving Buc—or *any* method. What a shame. *Rings of Power* presents lots of adventuring intrigue. It's just not easily accessible.

—H.H.W.

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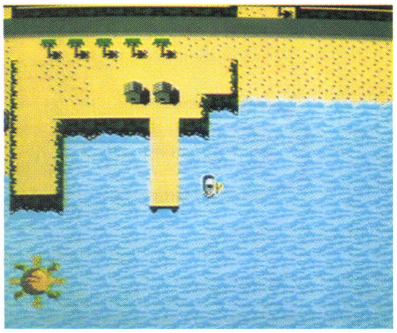

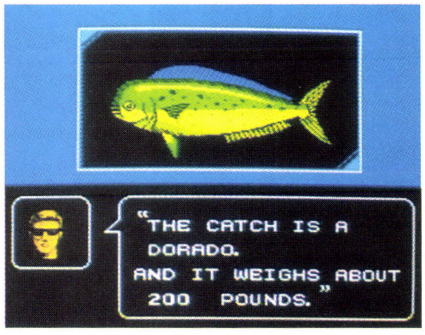

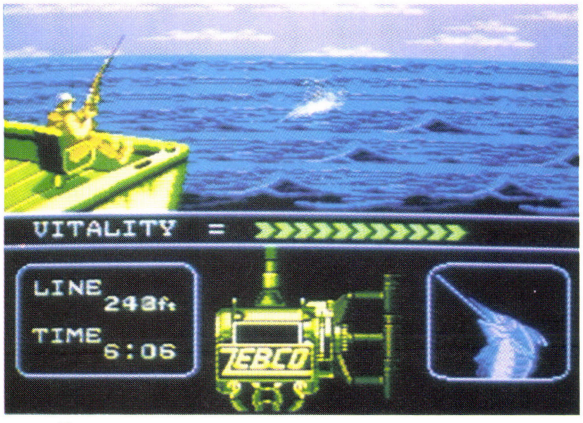

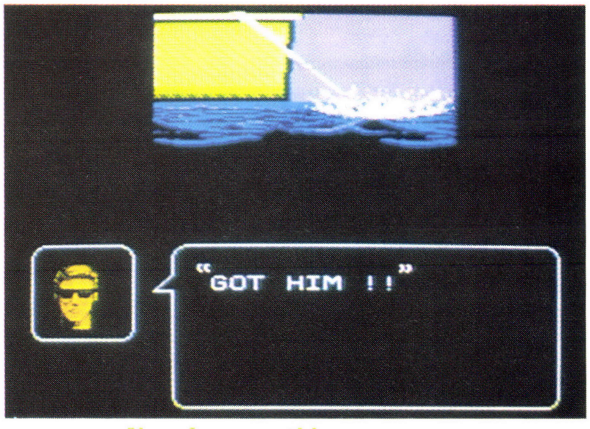

Now for something completely different: Hot*B's *The Blue Marlin* is a deep-sea fishing simulator that offers everything short of rolling waves and the smell of salt water.

The Blue Marlin

HOT*B

For the Nintendo Entertainment System ($41.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	**3**	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

And now for something completely different: *The Blue Marlin*, a deep-sea fishing simulator from Hot*B (makers of *The Black Bass*). Now, I'm sorry, but I've gotta ask this: Do we really *need* a deep-sea fishing simulator for the Nintendo? That's dubious. But—and this is crucial—do we *need* yet another platform game or another scrolling shooter or another road race or more robot ballplayers? No, no, no! So a "dubious" wins it easily over a triple negative, and we proceed to be grateful just for the change of pace.

The Blue Marlin takes place over the course of four simulated days of tournaments; a "day" can take about an hour to play. The goal is, simply, to catch the biggest qualifying fish in each tournament. Not every fish counts: Marlins, swordfish and sailfish all qualify, but you won't get points for tuna, shark, barracuda and others.

Each day, you begin fishing in one of four general areas (Florida or any of three Hawaiian Island groupings). The weather's variable, but didn't seem to have much effect on the game. You cast off promptly at 8 a.m. Your boat can handle a dozen catches, and, at 4 p.m., even if you're in the middle of a long and difficult fight, you cut bait and head back to port for the weighing-in.

The day's spent cruising around a small area with your line strength, line length, type of bait and depth of bait all set to your specifications. You look for schools of fish, whales or flocks of gulls; trawling your bait behind them usually reveals a marlin in pursuit. Once you get a nibble, the fight begins. You really have to learn the basics of landing these fish (most of which weigh more than you do, and have more muscle): pulling up on the rod, reeling in the slack, thumbing the

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reel and so on. Sometimes the hook isn't set well, which you really can't control, so you just have to be cautious not to put too much load on the line. Eventually, either you will tire out your prey—humorously represented by a close-up of the fish "sweating"—or it will do the same to you.

From day to day, providing your performance improves, the game will grant you greater muscle strength, body strength and skill. Special situations pop up from time to time, requiring you to deal with nasty fish that are jumping wildly, trying to cut the line on your boat's propellers or have your reel or glove smoking. Patience and intelligence are rewarded with incredible catches; I landed several 800-pound marlins in the course of the tournament. A password feature allows you to stop playing at any time and resume the game later.

The graphics are without much animation or variety, but, like most good games, *The Blue Marlin*'s strategy makes the graphics seem very secondary. The music is decent but too ever-present; game publishers should learn that silence and quiet sound effects can sometimes be more effective accompaniment (especially to a game such as this one) than constant, repetitive jingles.

It may all sound pretty mundane, and, compared to blasting aliens, I suppose it is. However, after an hour or so, I was "hooked" on *The Blue Marlin*. I liked the rhythm; you gently cruise for awhile, leisurely trying different lures and depths. Then there's a tug on the line and the excitement picks up. I felt truly frustrated with myself when making incorrect decisions, and just as satisfied for winning the tournament. (That was the game's one major drawback: I finished my first tournament after a few hours, and there was nothing left to do except start over and cruise different areas.) And the halibut is that I *learned* something in the process: Like video gaming, deep-sea fishing is one of the few sports you can enjoy playing sitting down.

—J.M.

Hot-B USA
1255 Post St., Suite 1005
San Francisco, CA 94109
(415) 567-9501

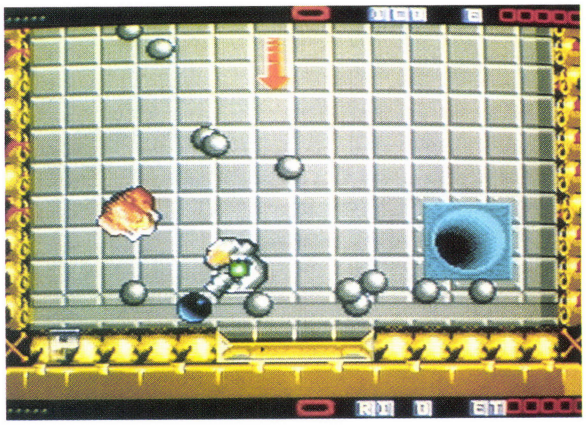
Ballistix

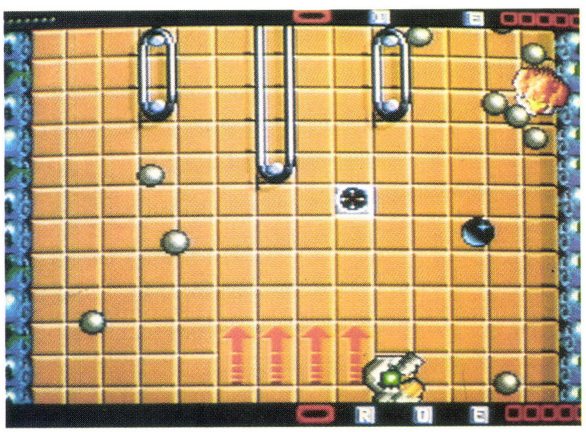
NEC

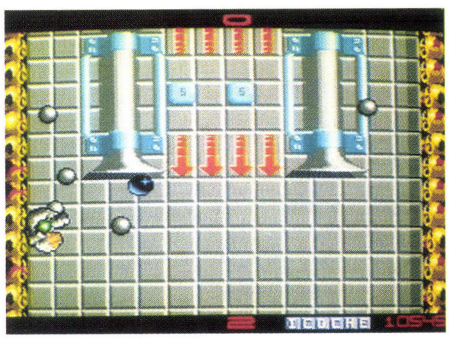
For the TurboGrafx-16 ($51.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

If you've ever wondered what air hockey will be like a few thousand years from now (okay, so you've got better things to think about), *Ballistix* for your TurboGrafx-16 may offer a clue. A futuristic sports contest, *Ballistix* takes traditional air hockey, merges it with a pinball machine, then sets the whole thing in the future, providing a fast-action game that'll keep you and your opponent (human or computer) battling for hours.



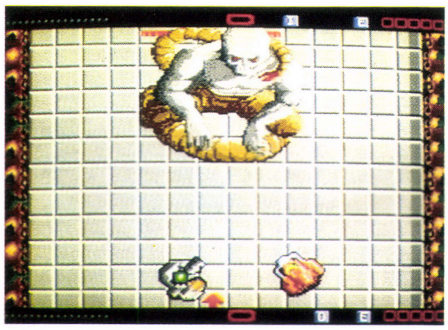


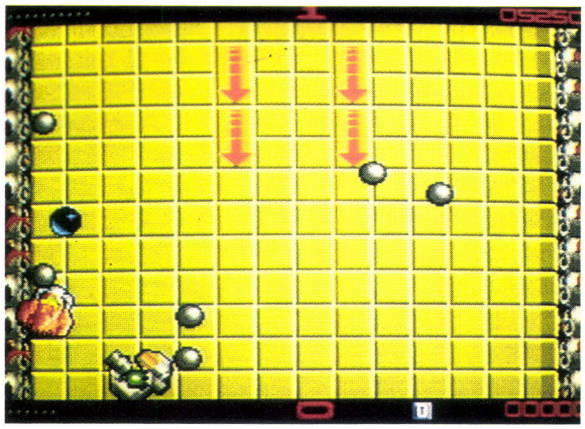


NEC has brought *Ballistix*, a Psygnosis computer game, to the TurboGrafx-16, taking air hockey into the future.

When you start playing, the game is simple enough. There are just the scrolling playing board and the two players. An alien hand reaches into the playfield, drops the ball and the battle begins. By shooting the main ball with balls of your own, you try to score into your opponent's goal. As you play, bonus items will appear on the screen, which you can collect by shooting them. The bonus items can add to your score, create a gate to protect your goal, slow the ball and more.

As the levels progress, though, complications set in. Pinball-like obstacles, for example, are added to the playing field. Bumpers block you from your opponent's goal, tunnels grab the ball and spit it out elsewhere and magnets snag the ball. In addition, you can expect to see some decidedly unpinball-like obstacles. Acid pools, for example, dissolve any ball that rolls through them, forcing the round to





If you like fast-action, sports-type games that you can play with another human being, NEC's *Ballistix* ought to fill the bill nicely.

start over with a new ball. In addition, letter blocks frequently appear on the board. If you can grab enough letters to spell R-I-C-O-C-H-E-T, you're awarded an extra 10,000 points.

Ballistix can be played against the computer or against another human player. While most sports games feature a computer player that's almost impossible to beat, *Ballistix*'s computer player can be tailored to your skill. The speed of the ball, the amount of gravity applied to the gaming board and the skill of the computer player can all be modified. You can also modify the number of goals required to finish a game, from one to five.

Ballistix is a translation from the computer game of the same name. The graphics in the Atari ST version of the game are gorgeous. The graphics for the TurboGrafx-16 version, however, are unimpressive. It's hard to believe that a second-generation machine like the TG-16 isn't capable of coming closer to *Ballistix*'s original graphics.

Still, if you like fast-action, sports-type games that you can play with another human player, *Ballistix* ought to fill the bill nicely. However, if you prefer arcade or role-playing games, you'll probably want to pass this one by.

—C.W.

NEC Technologies
1255 Michael Drive
Wood Dale, IL 60191
(708) 860-9500

Night Creatures

NEC

For the TurboGrafx-16 ($61.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10

While I personally always thought it might be kind of neat to be a vampire, a werewolf or some other such abomination, the object of *Night Creatures* is to avoid such a transformation. While out strolling the moonlit countryside, our hero has been bitten by an evil creature known as "Hecate," who has taken the form of a bat to swoop in on unsuspecting victims. As blood runs down your neck and everything begins to look hopeless, a wise woman from your town tells you that all is not yet lost. If you can gather your courage, along with a few choice weapons and perhaps a bit of luck, you'll be able to defeat Hecate and save yourself from this change. However, you have only until dawn to accomplish this, otherwise your fate will be sealed.

continued on page 62

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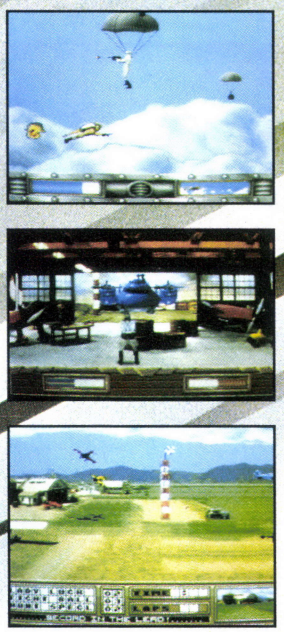

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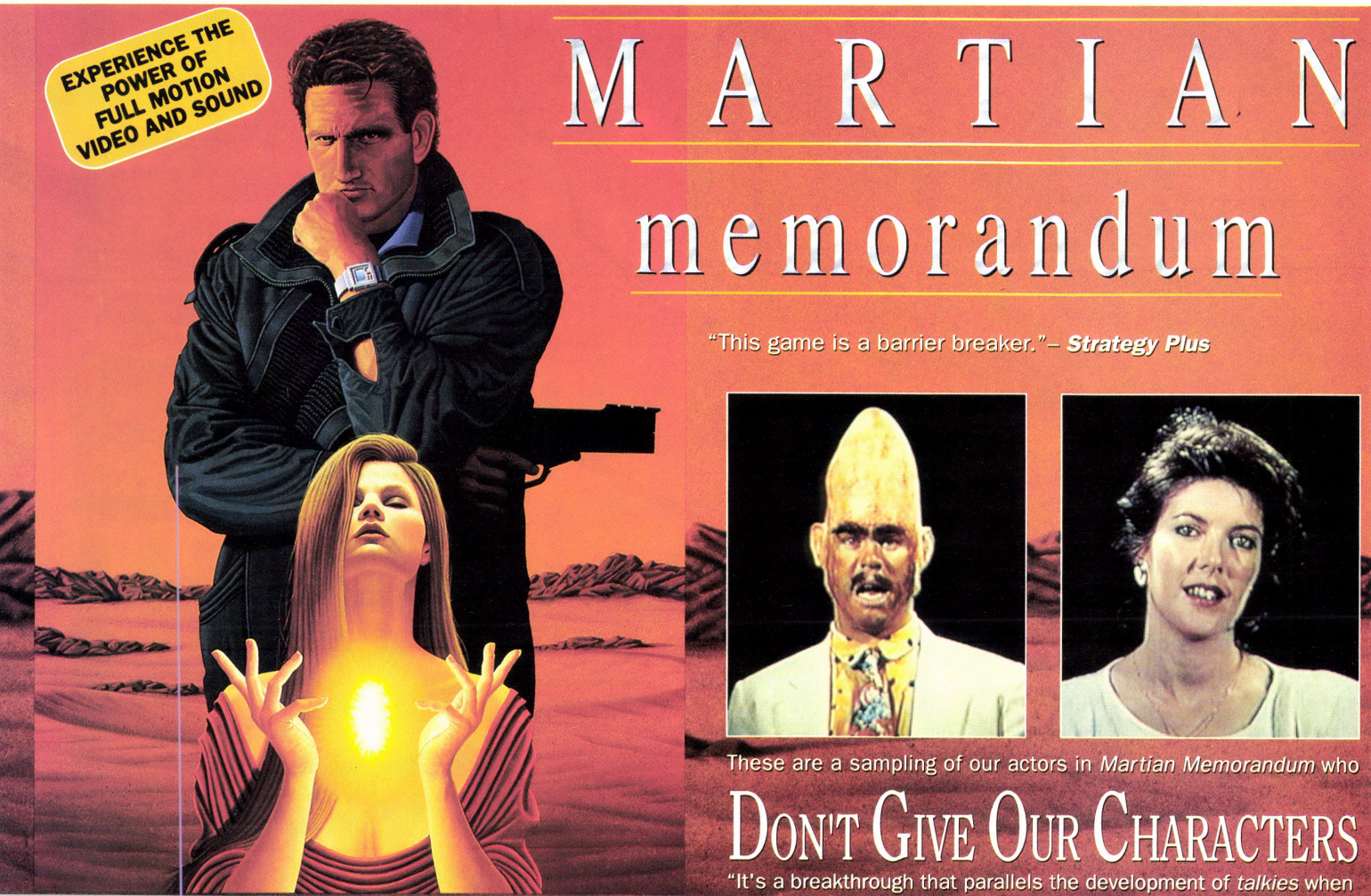
continued from page 59

The setting for this story is appropriately creepy, with a small, darkened village that houses many a rat and bat, a graveyard with tumbled headstones and spirits aplenty floating about, crypts, fields and marshes— all full of other night creatures bent upon your destruction. Witches, demons, swamp beasts, snakes, cats, glowing dogs and several others also frequent the area.

Your quest starts right after you recover from Hecate's attack. Travel back to the village and you will receive your first bits of advice from the wise woman of the village (who bears a striking resemblance to Aunt Jemima). Your first

goal will be to find some weapons—your fists work fine against rats, but not too well against much else. A few villagers will offer you some special items, but most of them must be found scattered within the different scenes of the game. Swords are known to work well against creatures in the forest, while wooden



weapons are much more effective in the swamp. If you don't figure these tips out yourself, your wise woman friend is quick to point them out.

Within some of these areas are boss-type night creatures that are more difficult to defeat than the normal ones. They alone aren't particularly difficult, but knowing which weapons to use makes the difference between success and failure. The rewards for defeating them are different from what you might expect. One boss, when defeated, will give you the power to turn into a wolf whenever you choose, and another lets you turn into an owl to fly through the skies. These transformations are costly, however, as they drain your vitality when you use them.

Your vitality meter is shown at the bottom of the screen, and must be carefully watched. The constant barrage of attacks from all about will knock it down quickly if you don't fight back. There are some creatures within all the areas that, when killed, will turn into a vitality power-up that will restore a small portion of your health. These power-ups become more scarce as you proceed, however.

The setting for NEC's *Night Creatures* is appropriately creepy: a small, darkened village that houses many a rat and bat—which is just what the name implies.

You begin the game with only one life and three continues; the latter will start you at the beginning of the scene you were in when you died. The areas are all connected in a circular fashion, and may be reached either by scrolling to the left or the right, so the game is somewhat nonlinear in play, though there are still certain tasks that must be completed before you may progress.

Night Creatures starts off with a good story line, but supports it halfheartedly, with mediocre game play and sound support. The backgrounds are okay, as are the creatures themselves (except for somewhat jerky animation), but the soundtrack doesn't change, and sound effects other than the blunt "thump!" of a bat's skull being lightly crunched are nonexistent. The overall effect was an average game that didn't have much to draw me into it or get me particularly interested in saving the character from his fate.

—B.W.

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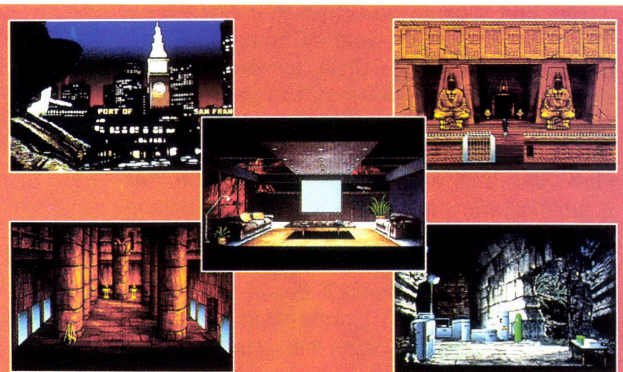

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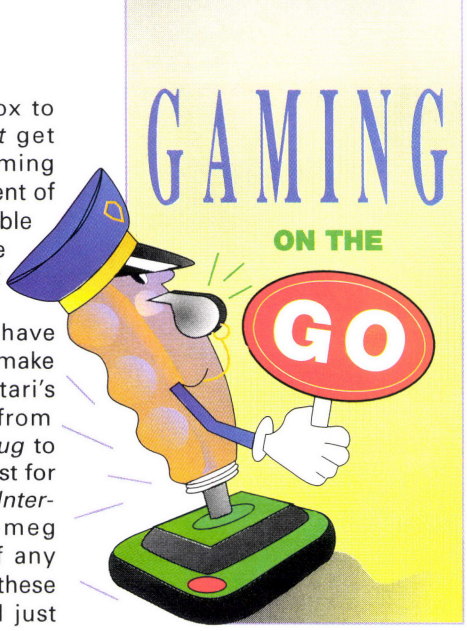

BY
CHRIS BIENIEK

I'd like to use this month's soapbox to talk about the games that *don't* get included in VG&CE's portable gaming roundup. In trying to balance the content of each column between all of the portable systems and manufacturers, there are usually a couple of games that get left out in the cold.

This time, two very special titles have been squeezed out, and I wanted to make sure that I mentioned them both. Atari's *Crystal Mines II* borrows elements from classics like *Boulder Dash* and *Dig Dug* to create an addictive action/puzzle contest for the Lynx; and Konami's *Gradius—The Interstellar Assault* is a red-hot, two-meg shooter that'll blister the fingers of any Game Boy owner. I'm giving each of these games an enthusiastic thumbs-up—I just wish we had enough room to tell you more about them.

Now, on with the show! Hope your batteries are charged up, 'cause here we go....

Star Trek

ULTRA

For the Nintendo Game Boy (NA)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

My first look at the Game Boy version of *Star Trek* was at last year's Consumer Electronics Show. At the time, it wasn't much more than a rough demo of the game's first level. I could barely conceal my disappointment—I had just been checking out the NES *Star Trek*, which was shaping up to be a sure winner, and here was a ridiculous shoot-'em-up with the *U.S.S. Enterprise* zipping around and blasting asteroids. "The *Galileo* shuttlecraft could probably maneuver like that," I remember thinking, "but old NCC-1701? With her crew of 400-plus? Get outta here!"

Well, now the final version has arrived, and it's a lot better than I ever expected it to be. The shoot-'em-up scenarios are still a major part of the game, but I've had to rethink my theories about the capabilities of a Star Fleet Class I Heavy Cruiser ever since I saw the episode of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* in which Captain Picard took the helm and *personally* guided the *Enterprise* out of a dense asteroid field.

Aside from the variety of scenarios involved (asteroids, Klingons, Romulans, space amoebas), the thing that keeps the shooter sequences interesting is the option to balance the ship's power between three different areas: shields, speed and phaser power. After you navigate through a bunch of these seriously challenging sectors, Kirk and a landing party beam down to explore the surface of one of three planets that hold the components of the fusion disrupter that can save the galaxy from the planet-eating Doomsday Machine.

While it doesn't quite capture the flavor of the original TV show to the extent that the NES version does, the Game Boy version of *Star Trek* still makes you feel like a part of the *Enterprise* crew. It's a challenging game that's fun for Trekkers and other intelligent life forms.

Ultra Software Corporation
900 Deerfield Parkway
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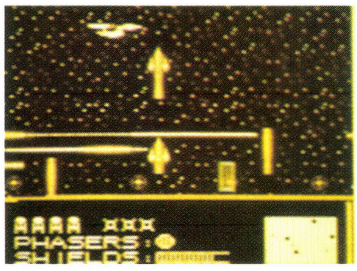
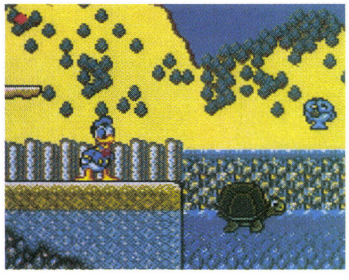
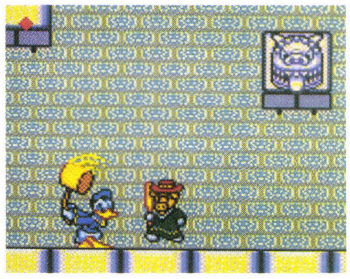
(708) 215-5111



Above: Ultra's *Star Trek* for the Game Boy. Below: *The Lucky Dime Caper*, by Sega, for the Game Gear.





The Lucky Dime Caper Starring Donald Duck

SEGA

For the Sega Game Gear ($39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

In *The Lucky Dime Caper*, Game Gear owners are given the opportunity to guide Donald Duck through a high-spirited, side-scrolling, run-and-jump adventure. No, Daisy hasn't been kidnapped—but Donald's nephews, Huey, Dewey and Louie, have been. They were seized in the siege on the money fort of Donald's uncle, Scrooge McDuck, by the old man's longtime nemesis, the evil sorceress Magica DeSpell, who also managed to get her hands on McDuck's lucky dime ("Old Number One," he calls it).

Our old pal Donald had a tough act to follow—namely, the Game Gear version of *Castle of Illusion Starring Mickey Mouse*. Heck, these days it's hard for any *Super Mario Bros.* clone on any system to compete for your gaming dollar. Licensing a popular character can be a big asset, but, in the case of *The Lucky Dime Caper*, the weight of the old, tired "guy game" format is carried swiftly along by the high quality of the game's graphics and animation.

Donald runs, leaps, crawls and swings a big cartoon hammer amid the same kind of fast-paced action that distinguishes the Disney titles that Capcom continues to release for the NES. The character animation is incredibly smooth, and the deep, rich colors of all of the screen elements are a feast for the eyes. Even Donald's legendary temper is evident—many video-game characters will tap their feet or put their hands on their hips if you stop manipulating the controller for a few seconds, but Donald's impatience boils over into a stomping, steaming tantrum as soon as you take your thumbs off the buttons.

Since the game surely won't win any awards for originality, it would appear that

Sega is banking on *The Lucky Dime Caper* to succeed on the basis of Donald Duck's famous name. Having seen the excellence of the game's visuals, I'd say it's a pretty safe bet.
Sega of America Inc.
130 Shoreline Drive
Redwood City, CA 94065
(415) 508-2800

Toki

ATARI

For the Atari Lynx ($39.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Here's another example of a full-sized coin-op game that has made the transition from the arcades to the Lynx without sacrificing too many of the qualities that made the original so much fun.

Toki is interesting for two important reasons: First, it's licensed from Fabtek (most of the Lynx's coin-op licenses are related to Atari Games titles), and, secondly, it's a game that never really took off in the U.S. the way it did in Japan. A scrolling *Mario*-style epic, *Toki* spins the tale of a blue-eyed ape who bounces and spitballs his way through a surrealistic tropical wonderland, battling wild creatures and "boss" characters in a valiant search for the kidnapped Princess Miho. The title screen displays a hilariously abrupt plot summary: The wicked voodoo chieftain Vookimedlo appears, lightning strikes, a huge, disembodied hand grabs the blonde and a tall, handsome Toki is zapped by a magic spell that changes him into a simian Sad Sack. Hey, what more could you possibly need to know?

Though there isn't much about the game that's truly original, there are plenty of neat surprises. Certain power-up articles can be found and worn by the chimp—a football helmet for protection from injury, sneakers for high jumping, even a pair of swimming goggles for when he dives into water. Game play is a bit on the slow side, but with so many things happening on the screen, the leisurely pace is more of a blessing than a curse. The graphics are pretty decent, and there are some great sound effects—the "boing!" of the bouncing boulders sounds like it was lifted straight out of a Warner Brothers cartoon.

Toki's strongest suit lies in its faithfulness to the arcade version. Atari's programmers have gleefully cloned nearly every detail of the coin-op with a level of fanaticism that's ordinarily reserved for such subjects as politics or religion. It's fun for everyone, but it's a special treat for those who were lucky enough to have played the little-seen original.
Atari Corporation
1196 Borregas Ave.
Sunnyvale, CA 94088-3427
(408) 745-2000

***Toki*, by Atari, for the Lynx.**

Pyramids of Ra

MATCHBOX

For the Nintendo Game Boy ($28.50)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

Imagine, if you will, a screen full of connected tiles, seen from directly overhead. Then, picture a round ball at rest on a tile near the center of the screen. You can make the ball jump to any adjacent tile, but diagonal moves are not allowed. Each time the ball jumps from one tile to the next, the last occupied tile vanishes from the screen.

Once you've landed on all the tiles and caused them to disappear, you can advance to the next screen—but some of the tiles must be landed on two or three times before they're gone, and your path must end on one specific "target" tile. Throw in a wealth of special tiles that move, alter your direction and change the orientation of the screen, and you've got *Pyramids of Ra*—and believe me, the Game Boy version is a lot more fun than the one you're playing in your head right now!

Though it starts out fairly easy, there's a smooth progression from the simple levels to the harder ones. The graphics must obviously be kept simple, but there's a nice kind of 3-D effect when the ball bounces and you can see its shadow extending across the playfield.

If you're a strategy purist who would only be interested in a game like *Pyramids of Ra* for its puzzle qualities, you're not going to appreciate the higher levels of this contest. A "reverse direction" tile requires quick thinking and fast fingers when it's also a "moving" tile! But games like *Tetris* have long since proven that it's possible to mix puzzle-game problem solving with control-pad dexterity. Strike a good balance between these two qualities, and the result, like *Pyramids of Ra*, can prove to be a very addicting experience.
Matchbox Toys (USA)
P.O. Box 5009
Burnsville, MN 55337
(612) 898-4488

Q*Bert for Game Boy

JALECO

For the Nintendo Game Boy

($28.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

No, I'm not kidding—the official title is *Q*Bert for Game Boy,* really! I don't know why Jaleco felt obligated to make that point so clearly, but what *is* clear is that one of the most charismatic of the first wave of "cute" video-game characters is alive and well.

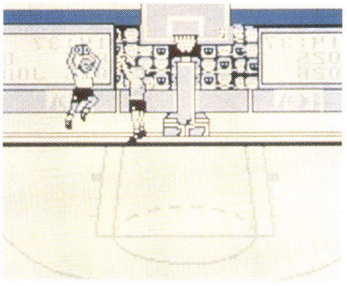
For those of you who don't remember Q*Bert (and missed his resurrection on the NES a few years back), he's a goggle-eyed ball of orange fur with three-toed feet and a long snout. At one time there were Q*Bert toys, T-shirts, a Saturday morning cartoon show and even a Q*Bert breakfast cereal.

Of course, the game behind the hype is still a solid one. Standing on a pyramid of layered cubes drawn in three-quarter perspective, Q*Bert hops around the screen, changing the top of each cube to the "target color" as he touches it. Bonus items appear on occasion, and weird enemies like Coily and Ugg chase our hero around. You can escape one of these creatures by leaping off of the playfield onto a floating disc, which carries you to another corner of the screen while your nemesis jumps blindly to its doom. Some levels require you to land on each cube several times in order to get the right color.

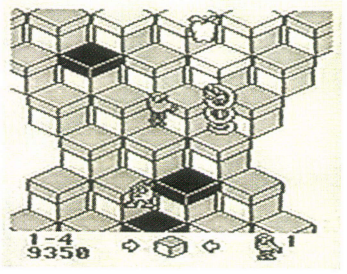
Though Q*Bert's exploits don't sound like they would translate well to a small, colorless screen, *Q*Bert for Game Boy* uses patterns and shading for some clever effects. Having solved that problem, the game builds on the solid foundation of one of the most frequently imitated games of all time by adding dozens of different playfields, different cube designs, control options and even animated intermissions (*Q*Bert: The Movie*—a new chapter after each level).

Embellishments like these have kept the game fresh for a new generation of players, but they're not so overpowering that they detract from the dose of nostalgia that *Q*Bert for Game Boy* provides to older gamers. Not only does it prove that the classics deserve to be preserved on the newer game systems, but it also demonstrates exactly how they should be done.

Jaleco USA Inc.
310 Era Drive
Northbrook, IL 60062
(708) 480-1811



Electronic Arts' *Jordan vs. Bird: One on One* for the Game Boy.



***Q*Bert for Game Boy*, by Jaleco.**

Jordan vs. Bird: One on One

ELECTRONIC ARTS

For the Nintendo Game Boy

($29.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	**2**	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	**4**	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	**3**	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	**3**	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

A lot has changed since Electronic Arts unleashed the original *One on One* basketball game for the Atari 8-bit and Commodore 64 home computers. Video-game technology has evolved to a level of sophistication that the designers of such early games may never have dreamed was possible, and there's been an explosion of interest in the NBA that (some folks might say) has paralleled the career of a certain Michael Jeffrey Jordan. Jordan has replaced Julius "Dr. J" Erving in the game's title, but that's one of the few major differences between the first *One on One* and this Game Boy version.

Plenty of options are available: You can play against another player or the computer, and you can also participate in slam-dunk and three-point shooting competitions like the ones sponsored by the NBA during All-Star weekend. Sadly, none of this diversity can rescue the game from a quagmire of audiovisual and playability problems.

Sometimes the program refuses to accept controller input, most noticeably when you're trying to put up a shot. The logic behind the computer players' actions is similarly lacking. As much as I wanted to "be like Mike," I found it to be nearly impossible to compete with a computer-controlled Larry Bird. Nearly every time he gets the ball, he dribbles a few times, then tosses in a three pointer. Swish! If he misses, he scurries over to grab the rebound and takes it back behind the three-point line. Swish! Neither player can afford to attempt to block a shot—when you jump, you stay in the air for such a ridiculously long time that it becomes a simple matter for your opponent to grab the rebound before you even come down!

There's a certain vicarious thrill to be had if you can get Michael to perform some of the trickier dunks, and the game is blessed with a surprisingly well-written instruction manual that includes each player's tips on how to beat the other guy. But that's about the best thing I can say about *Jordan vs. Bird: One on One.*

Electronic Arts
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San Mateo, CA 94404
(415) 572-ARTS

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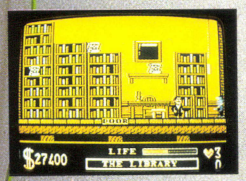

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CIRCLE #133 ON READER SERVICE CARD

The Chessmaster

SEGA

For the Sega Game Gear ($34.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

As far as I can tell, there are only three criteria by which a chess video game can be judged. First, the skill level of the computer as an opponent is crucial. Will you be forced to play at a particular level of difficulty, or can you tailor the computer's expertise to match your own?

Next, there should be plenty of setup and game play options available. Can you play as the black or white pieces, take back moves and ask the computer for hints when you need them?

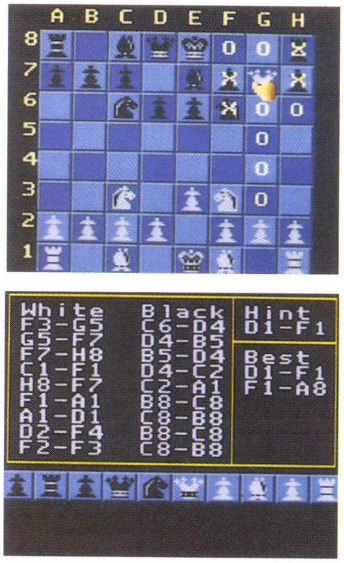
The Game Gear version of the familiar *Chessmaster* computer title excels in these, as well as the third criterion—the third, of course, is less important than the first two, but for me it poses the most interesting question: Does it have neat graphics and sounds? This one sure does, right from the title screen, which shows the box art as a warm, friendly voice speaks out, "Welcome...to the Chessmaster." This same voice announces each move and its consequences with the same calm tones: "White... black—capture... white—check, and mate."

The play controls are incredibly smooth. A floating hand moves around the screen at your command—press a button and the fingers close on the nearest piece, and press it again to put the piece down after you've moved it.

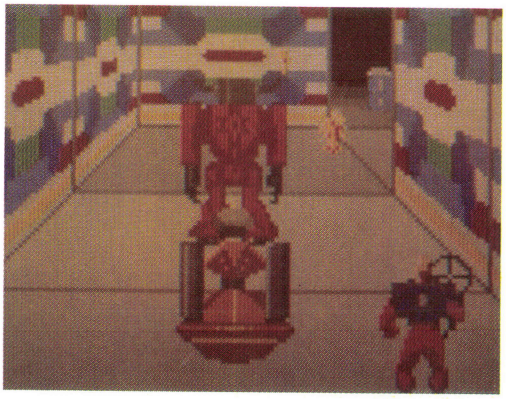
Of course, the program won't allow any illegal moves; in fact, you can get a quick lesson in the fundamentals of the game by using the "show moves" option—when you pick up a piece, small dots show where that piece can move. Learning to plot strategies is a horse of an entirely different color, but (speaking as a chess novice) I did learn quite a few tactics from watching the computer's moves and asking for hints at appropriate times. Suffice it to say that I was able to beat the computer at the easiest setting, and the highest level of difficulty proved to be too tough for some more experienced chess players. Oh, and of course there is a two-player option.

The Chessmaster looks and plays just fine on the Game Gear—I dare say it's more fun than the real thing.

Sega of America Inc.
130 Shoreline Drive
Redwood City, CA 94065
(415) 508-2800



Sega's *The Chessmaster* for the Game Gear.



***Xybots*, by Atari, for the Lynx.**

Xybots

ATARI

For the Atari Lynx ($39.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Xybots borrows a theme that goes all the way back to such classic titles as *Berzerk* (and its sequel, *Frenzy*): a humanoid who wanders through a maze of corridors and blasts mechanical enemies with a laser gun. The twist is that the screen shows a pseudo-first-person view from behind your character as he walks.

The coin-op *Xybots* used a clever control configuration in which the joystick moved your character around, but you could actually twist the joystick to the left or right in order to change the direction you were facing. The Lynx uses a different method to accomplish a similar effect: You use the control pad to move, and to turn around you simply hold the B button down and tap the control pad left or right. The transition between viewpoints is unfortunately abrupt, but, if you pick up some of the coins you'll find scattered on the ground, you can use them to buy maps and tracking devices that make it easy to find your place if you get disoriented from turning around too quickly.

The arcade game was set up for two players on a split screen, and, because the top half of each player's display showed an information window similar to the one that is called up by the **OPTION 2** button in the Lynx version, the actual playfield screen was only one quarter the size of the entire monitor. Since the entire Lynx screen is devoted to this part of the original display (a two-player, ComLynx game obviously shows the other character's viewpoint on the other person's Lynx), this is one portable game that really doesn't seem much smaller than the coin-op original!

Though it seems to be much easier than the arcade version, *Xybots* is a good translation of a truly enjoyable game.

Atari Corporation
1196 Borregas Ave.
Sunnyvale, CA 94088-3427
(408) 745-2000

Be here next month as we blow the dust off of another classic arcade game that, like this month's *Q*Bert*, has been totally revamped and updated for the Game Boy owners of 1992. Reader feedback to this column is always appreciated. Send your comments and suggestions to: VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT, Attn: *Gaming on the Go*, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210.

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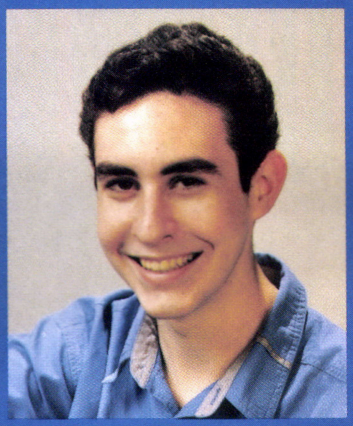

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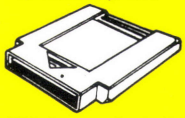

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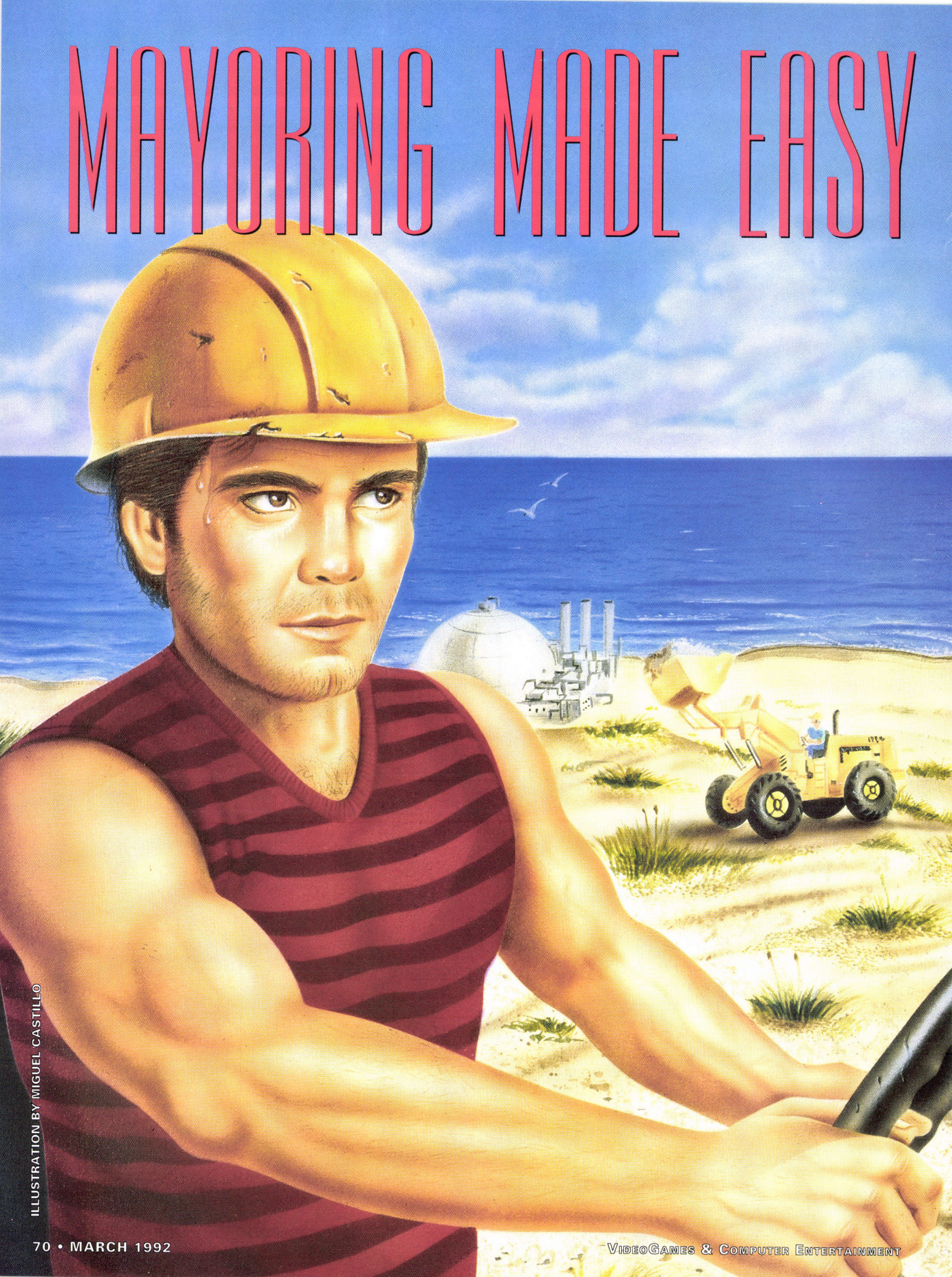


ILLUSTRATION BY MIGUEL CASTILLO

A PLAYER'S GUIDE TO SIMCITY

SIMCITY, available on most computers and recently released for the Super NES, has won just about every computer-game award on the planet. Once you sit down to play, you'll quickly see why. In this engrossing simulation, you get to take on the job of mayor and create a city of your own. It's up to you to zone land properly, spend tax money wisely and generally see to the well-being of your residents. If you fail, you'll be fired faster than you can say "You won't have *me* to kick around anymore!" But if you've got city-building savvy, you'll soon be the proud owner of a thriving megalopolis, a city with a population of over half a million.

In the following pages, we offer instruction on basic city management, as well as a preview for those of you not already familiar with this award-winning simulation. The votes are in, and you've been elected mayor. Think you can handle the job?

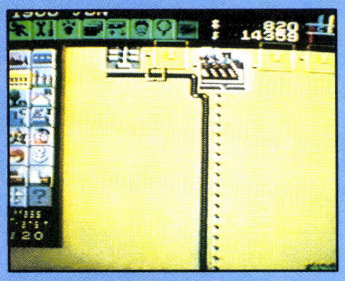
BY CLAYTON WALNUM

When choosing a map to play, keep in mind that the more water, the less room there is for your population to grow.

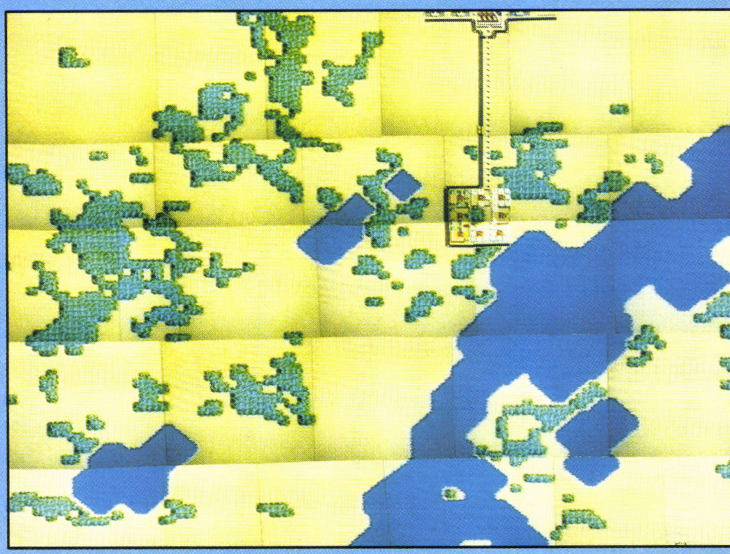
Once you select your map, take some time to explore and plan. This small peninsula, for example, looks like a good place for an airport, so you want to make sure you leave it free.

The first step in creating your town is building a power plant. However, such a plant (at least the coal-burning variety) will cause much pollution, so you should position it on a map edge, far away from where you'll build your residential areas.

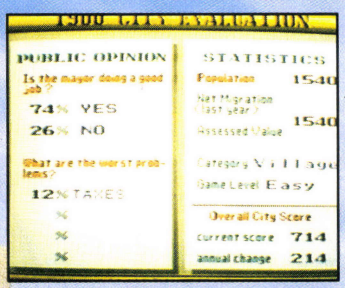
The best place for the industrial zones is in the same area as your power plant, because they produce a lot of pollution, too.



Of course, having industrial zones will do little good if your residents have no way to get there. So, the next step is to put in roads. However, because regular roads can cause a lot of pollution and congestion, it's a good idea to put in mass transit right from the start. Yeah, it's more expensive, but by putting in tracks instead of roads, you'll save yourself a lot of trouble later.

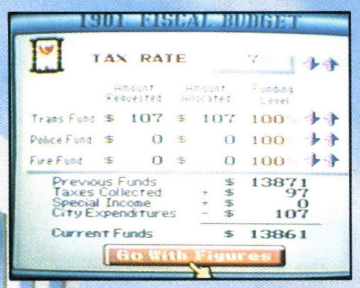


Here's our town now. It's small, but it's growing fast. We must continue to build new zones, but should take it slowly, so we don't run out of money. Sometimes, after a session of building, it's a good idea to settle back for a few years and do nothing but gather up taxes in order to refill the town's coffers. Of course, for this technique to be successful, you must have a stable town and be collecting more taxes than you're spending.



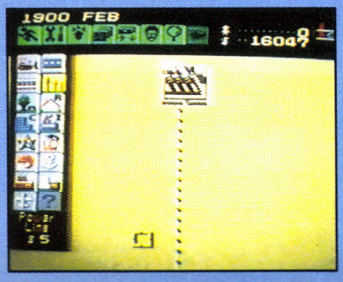
Use the city evaluation screen to see what the people think of their new mayor. Right now 74% of the people think we're doing a good job, and the only complaint is taxes. (People always complain about taxes.) You need be concerned only about complaints with ratings of around 20% or higher.

All right! We've already built up a population of 2,000. Not bad for beginning mayors.



At the beginning of the game, your city expenditures will probably be higher than what you're collecting in taxes. This is okay, as long as you make sure you keep some cash on hand. When your population gets larger, your tax collections will increase.

Much has been said about how to configure the different zones. When setting up a new neighborhood, you will want to conserve as much space as possible, while still providing road access to every zone. This block formation usually works the best.

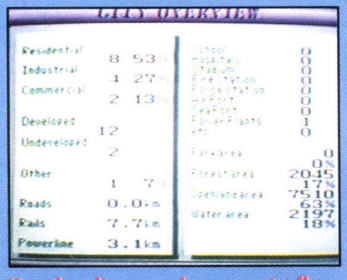


After setting up your first residential zones, you must connect them to the power plant. No one will move in until they can turn on their lights!

Almost as soon as people start moving in (see the houses?), they start complaining about a lack of jobs. For your town to be healthy, you need to build industrial areas in which the residents can work.

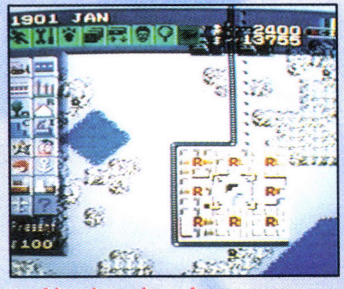
Our residential area may be small, but the people still have certain requirements. Now that they all have jobs, they want someplace to spend their money, so it's time to put up a few commercial zones.

Because commercial zones are not susceptible to pollution, they should be constructed between residential zones and industrial zones. Like any zone, they require good road access.

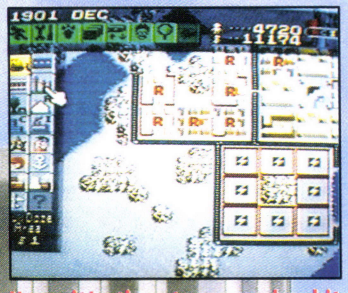


Use the city overview map to fine-tune your city's zoning requirements. A stable town requires a 2:1:1 relationship between residential, commercial and industrial areas, respectively. In other words, the number of residential areas should be about the same as the number of commercial and industrial zones added together.

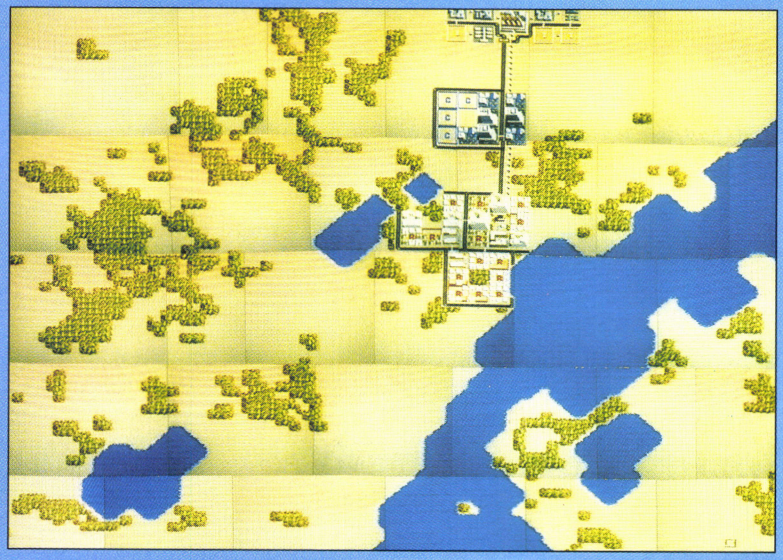
As a mayor, you're sometimes offered the opportunity to give your town gifts. The first gift you can offer is your own house. If you build your house in the center of a residential area, people will move in faster. Everyone wants to live next to the mayor's mansion.



In this wintertime shot, you can see the mayor's mansion nestled in the center of this residential block.

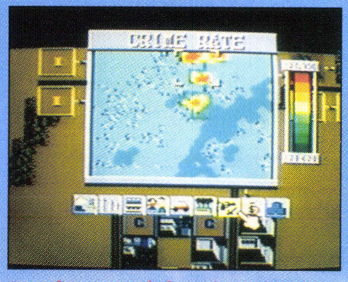


Now, it's time to expand a bit more, creating new zones and ensuring they have plenty of access to the roads.

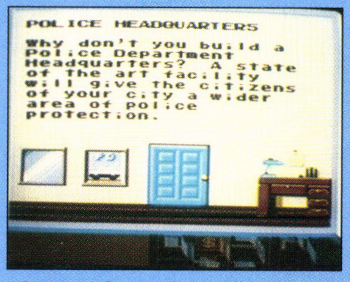


Here's our town now, showing a thriving and growing commercial area. In the residential areas, high-rise apartment buildings are already appearing, and look at all the room we have for expansion!

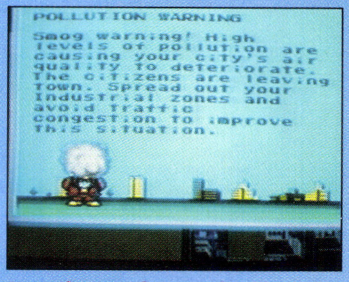
Wow! We're officially a city, with a population of over 10,000 people. We must be doing something right.



To take care of the crime situation, we must first go to the map display and see where our biggest crime areas are. Then we need to put police departments in those areas. Note that industrial areas always require a lot of police coverage.

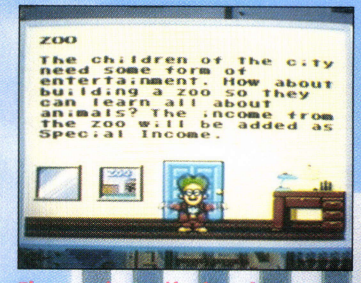


After we place a few police departments of our own, we'll be awarded a police headquarters. This gift to the town will help us control the crime that's been annoying our residents.



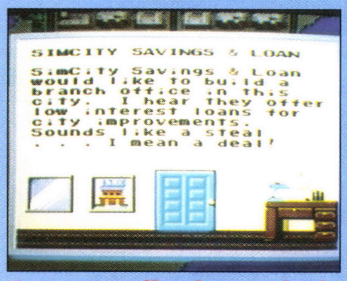
Now that we have a few factories going, pollution is starting to be a problem. Pollution is tough to deal with. Keeping industrial areas spread out and filled in with parks will help. However, by spreading out industrial areas, we lose valuable space. That's not a critical problem at this stage of the game, but once our city covers the entire map, we'll need to start condensing our zones in order to fit in more people.

Uh-oh. All the extra zones have put a strain on our power plants. We need to build new plants or replace the old ones with modern, nuclear plants. Though they are expensive, nuclear plants should be used as soon as you can afford them, since they add no pollution and provide much more power than the coal-burning plants. Of course, nuclear plants have a tendency to melt down now and then. But what's a little radiation between friends?

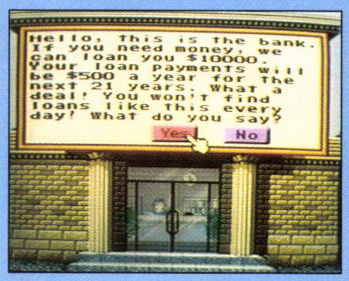


The zoo is a gift that does great things for residential areas. The kids love it, and people will move into the area faster so they can be where all the fun is.

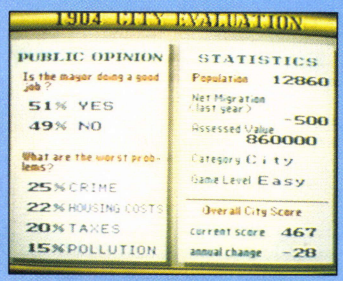
You can use the magnifying-glass tool to check on the status of individual zones.



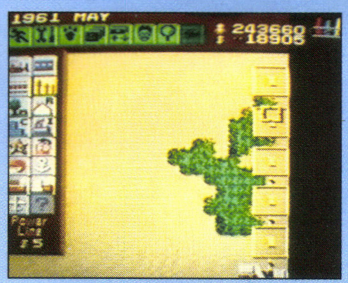
Here we're offered a new bank. You should place the bank in the center of a commercial area, where it'll encourage growth of the local businesses.



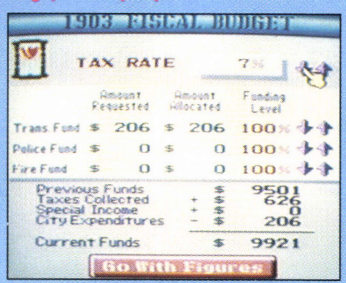
Of course, you can take a loan from the bank, if you like, but it's always better to stay out of debt. Remember: You have plenty of time in which to build your city; if you start getting low on cash, let the city run on its own for a few years, and collect taxes. Before you do this, though, make sure you're collecting more than you're spending. Otherwise, you're liable to come back to a bankrupt city and a lot of angry townspeople.



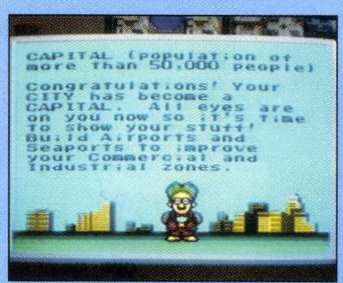
Whoops! The people's opinion of our job as mayor has slipped. Many people are whining about crime and housing costs. Housing costs can be reduced by supplying additional residential zones, especially in lower land-value areas.



Keeping industrial zones on the edge of the map is another way to handle pollution. When you do this, half the effects of the pollution are off-screen and are not added to the city's pollution factor.



With our higher population, we are collecting considerably more taxes than we are spending. We might, at this point, decide to reduce the taxes a little. This attracts more people to our city.

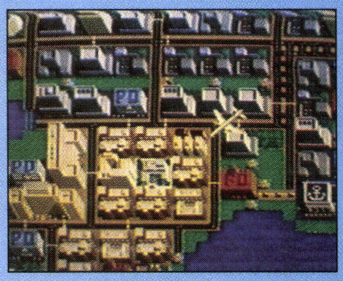


All of our careful building has given us a population of over 50,000, making us a full-fledged capital. Life is good!

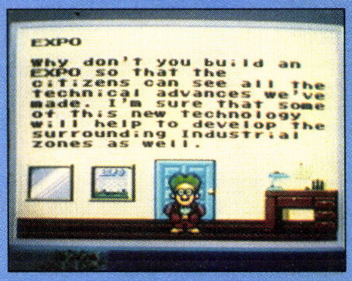
As our city grows, its residents will want more of the comforts that life in the modern world can provide, such as this stadium. Having a stadium in our city makes it an attractive place to live.

Our city is growing like a weed in a cow flop. And look at all those high-rise apartment buildings near the stadium! It appears our city's residents are real sporty folk.

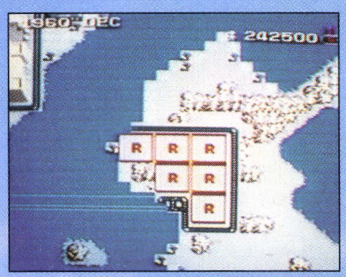
Eventually, your city residents will also demand a seaport and an airport. No large city should be without either of these connections to the outside world.



Make sure you build your airport on the outskirts of your city. Planes that frequently pass over city limits are a potential danger. Ever see what happens when a 747 crashes into a skyscraper?



The Expo gift is a perfect way to stimulate the growth of an industrial area.



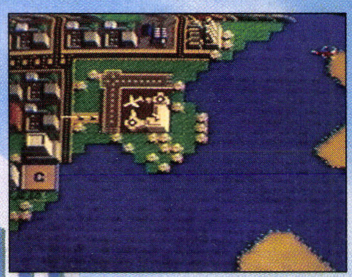
The areas on the other side of the river also require access to power and transportation. This means running cables and building tunnels. However...

...running many wires and tunnels across the river can cause shipwrecks.

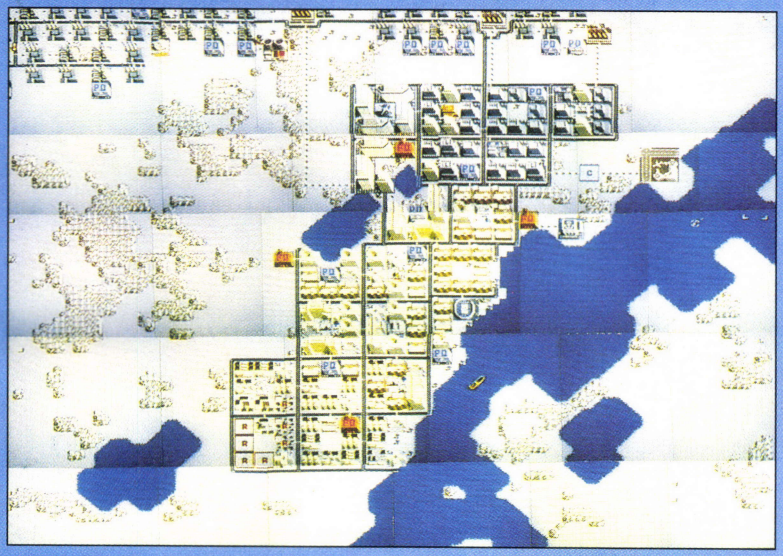
After the shipwreck is cleared, we must repair the damage. Here, we see that both the cables and the tunnels need to be fixed.

Another good trick for building up your population is to bulldoze hospitals and schools, and then rezone them as regular residential areas. Hospitals are the tall buildings with the crosses on top, while schools are small, horseshoe-shaped buildings. Keep in mind, though, that if you bulldoze too many hospitals and schools, random disasters will start to fall upon your city.

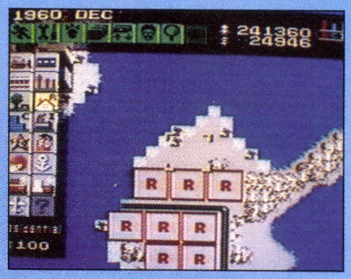
If you have a hard time spotting hospitals and schools, use the magnifying-glass tool. Hospitals and schools don't change when under the magnifier.



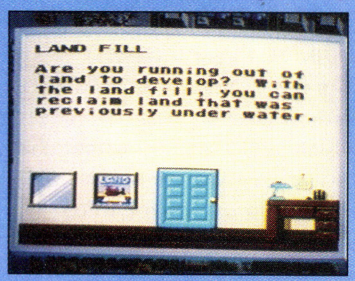
Improving the value of existing zones is another way to stimulate growth without building new zones. One way to do this is to plant a lot of parkland. Parks also help reduce pollution, which is the reason we have surrounded the airport here with parks.



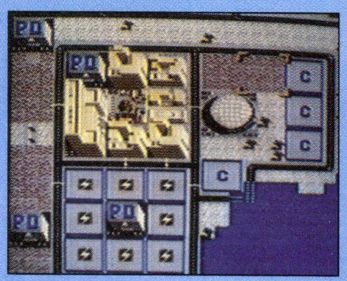
Winter may again be upon our city, but that hasn't slowed things down any. Our careful planning has rewarded us with a healthy, thriving city. There are a couple of minor problems, though. For example, see the empty commercial zone near the airport? It might be a good idea to run some roads by it and out to the airport and seaport. An area will grow only when it has access to transportation.



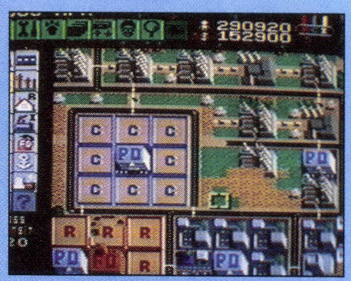
As shown in map 4, we still have plenty of room to expand on the mainland. However, before long, we're going to have to develop the land on the other side of the river. Fitting residential blocks in some of these smaller areas can be tricky.



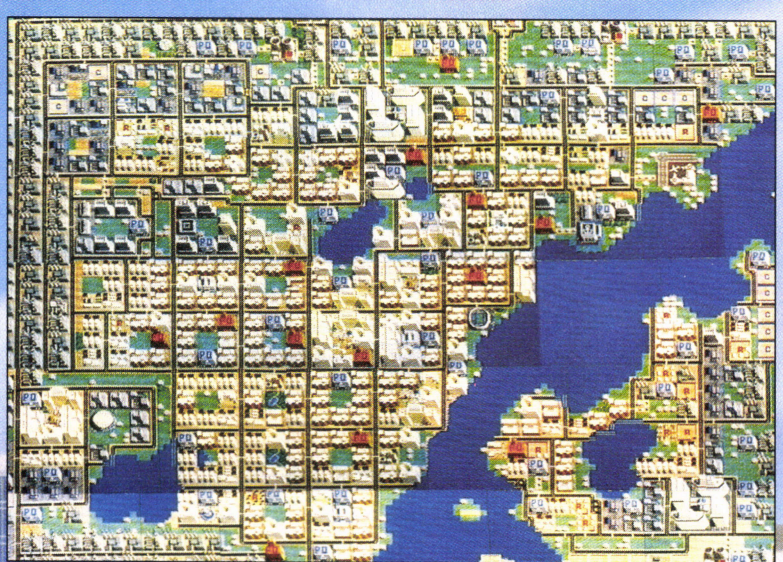
Landfill gifts are extremely valuable because they let you convert water into land. Use them wisely, giving yourself more room for expansion.



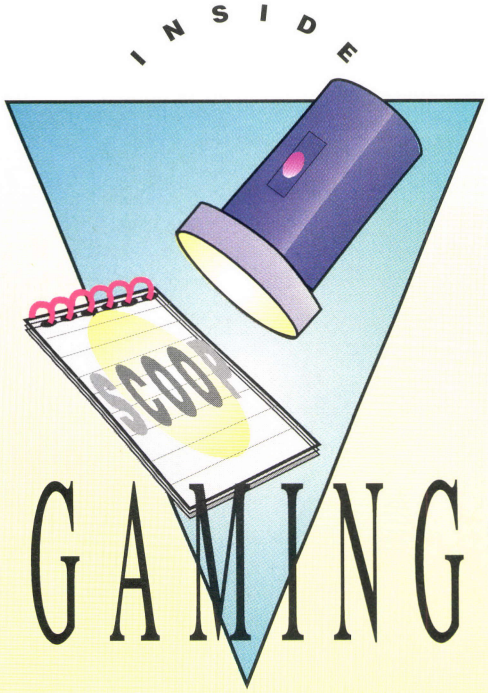
Once we've filled the map with our city, it's time to do some rezoning in order to make better use of our limited space. Push commercial areas back closer to the industrial areas, allowing your residential zones to expand a little. Also, try to condense the industrial area by building factories closer together. This will result in higher pollution, but frequently you can get away with it.



Here, we're replacing industrial zones with new commercial zones in preparation for condensing the industrial areas.



It's hard to believe that this massive city grew from such humble beginnings. Now here we are with a population of around 400,000. Being a mayor isn't so tough after all. How did you do?



THE SHAPE OF GAMES TO COME

by Arnie Katz

Writer, editor, lecturer and game designer Arnie Katz knows the field from every perspective. Each month, his column takes readers inside the world of video and computer games. This month, Arnie turns away from assessments of the recent past to gauge the immediate future of electronic gaming.

The last issue of VG&CE saluted the best games of 1991. You can always tell when a "best of the year" survey is about to end. When detailed explanations give way to cheery hopes for the coming year, the end of the article can't be too far ahead.

Helping pick the winners of the magazine's annual awards for excellence raises the natural question: What can gamers expect from the next 12 months? "Bigger and better" is the safe prediction. Electronic gaming has gotten bigger and better just about every year since Nolan Bushnell put the first *Pong* coin-op machine in that neighborhood tavern.

VG&CE produces several articles each year that preview upcoming video and computer games, usually based on wonders glimpsed at the Consumer Electronics Show. Each month, the magazine also sneaks peeks at major upcoming releases. This installment of *Inside Gaming* lies somewhere between the vague optimism of the annual "best of" review and the game-by-game specificity of the survey pieces.

The 8-bit Video Games

Time is running out for the Nintendo Entertainment System, the machine that launched the "Second Golden Age of Video Gaming." (All the other 8-bit consoles are pretty much dead in the United States, though the European market is still fairly lively.)

This is probably the last year that the NES will play a big role in the market, but gathering up all those machines for landfill would be premature. True, companies are deserting the 8-bit in droves, but removing them from the retail competition creates golden opportunities for other outfits. There's always a pile of money to be made by supporting a system with new products just as it is about to travel over the hill to the land of obsolescence.

Look for an unexpectedly large number of new carts for the NES between now and next Christmas. Publishers will try to wind up their 8-bit business on a high note, and that means getting virtually everything out in time for holiday gift-giving.

Forget about blockbusters. No mega-hits are waiting in the wings to delight NESers. The gilt-edged licenses and revolutionary concepts are destined for other segments of the electronic-gaming field. The 1992 releases for NES will include many solid, playable games, and the retail price is sure to drop, as the industry tries to wipe out the 8-bit inventory. NES owners will get more games for their money, which will partially offset the fact that few, if any, will be as fascinating as the 1991 top-of-the-line titles.

Another important category of releases will be cut-down versions of games actually designed for the 16-bit systems. Publication of "junior editions" when the market is changing systems is a well-established practice. It spreads the cost of a license over an additional title, and there are other economies that make an 8-bit version cheaper to produce when a 16-bit cartridge is also under development.

The 16-bit Video Games

The Super NES sold well during its first three months in the U.S. market, and the Genesis' outstanding Christmas sales surprised even some Sega of America executives.

The TurboGrafx-16's success is less certain. Consumer dissatisfaction with the software, and a technological disadvantage compared to the two 100% 16-bit systems, make it much harder for NEC to sell its machine, even at a lower retail price.

CD represents the TG-16's best chance to crack through, but it's a longshot. The CD peripheral introduced in 1989 did not win the public's favor, and it's unlikely that the upgrade NEC launched last fall will

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Below Is A Partial Listing

Call For Games Not On List

Nintendo

TITLE	BUY/SELL
A Boy and His Blob	12/24
Adv. Magic Kingdom	12/24
Adventure Island II	17/31
Adventure of Lolo III	18/37
American Gladiators	16/34
Andretties Grand Prix	14/28
Bandit Kings Of China	14/29
Barbie	13/27
Baseball Simulator	11/20
Bases Loaded III	18/36
Basewars	14/32
Batman 2	20/40
Battle Toads	20/44
Bill & Ted's Advent.	19/32
Bo Jackson Baseball	17/34
California Games	9/18
Castelian	10/20
Castlevania III	8/16
Chip & Dale	17/28
Darkman	15/30
Dreamin' Davey	17/37
Days Of Thunder	14/29
Dig Dug II	17/29
Dirty Harry	6/15
Double Dragon III	12/37
Dragon's Lair	15/27
Dragon Warrior II	21/43
Eliminator Boat Duel	15/31
F-15 Strike Eagle	16/34
Family Feud	15/33
Flight Of The Intruder	18/35
Flinstones	20/39
Frankenstein	12/34
Galaxy 5000	15/29
Golf Grand Slam	17/35
Gun Nac	12/29
Harlem Globetrotters	15/30
High Speed	17/35
Hunt for Red October	7/19
Ikari Warriors III	9/17
Isolated Warrior	12/22
J. Chan's Kung Fu	15/32
Kiwi Kraze	15/27
Klash Ball	14/31
Krazy Kreatures	13/26
Laser Invasion	16/34
Last Ninja	13/24
L' Empereur	24/50
Little Mermaid	17/34
Little Nemo	12/21
Magic Darts	15/34
Maniac Mansion	10/19
Megaman	20/45
Monopoly	25/40
Monster Truck Rally	13/27
MS. Pacman	14/28
MVP Baseball	16/38
Nascar Challenge	16/34
NES Open Golf	19/35
Ninja Gaiden III	19/40
Nobunagas Amb. II	17/39
North & South	14/25
Pacmania	14/24
Peter Pan	15/27
Pirates!	19/37
Rainbow Islands	15/26
RBI Baseball III	18/31
Robin Hood	18/38
Rockin' Kats	17/35
Robo Cop 2	17/37
Rocketeer	17/34

Nintendo

Romance 3 Kings II	27/49
Shatter Hand	15/30
Silver Surfer	10/24
Simpsons 2	25/42
Skull & Crossbones	15/27
Smash TV	16/32
Snow Brothers	20/34
Space Shuttle	15/33
Star Tropics	12/27
Star Wars	20/35
Super Jeopardy!	15/32
Super Mario Bros 3	19/37
Tail Spin	20/35
Teen Ninja Turtles II	15/35
Terminator	12/29
Tetris by Nintendo	17/28
Tiny Toon Adven.	18/35
Tom & Jerry	17/27
Touchdown Fever	19/29
Trog	15/28
Ultima II, Avatar	15/30
Uncharted Waters	25/52
Uninvited	16/34
Vegas Dream	22/39
Vice Project Doom	20/34
Videomation	15/35
Wally Bear	12/21
Where's Waldo?	20/37
Where Time/Carmen	22/39
Whomp Em	14/27
Wolverine	18/32
Wurm	18/30
Xevious	5/13
Xexyz	5/11
Yo Noid	12/20
Zanac	3/10
Zombie Nation	20/39

Super Nintendo

Actraiser	22/45
Baseball Simulator	22/44
Castlevania IV	26/46
Chessmaster	25/44
Combat BasketBall	24/42
Darius Twin	24/44
Drakkhen	20/39
F-Zero	24/37
Final Fantasy II	26/47
Final Fight	24/39
Golf Classics Waialae	22/47
Gradius III	15/34
Hole In One Golf	17/39
Home Alone	24/42
HyperZone	15/31
John Madden	24/44
Paperboy 2	24/42
Pilot Wings	24/39
Populous	17/34
RPM Racing	20/40
Sim City	17/32
Super Bases Loaded	24/42
Super Ghouls Ghosts	24/44
Super R-Type	17/39
Ultraman	24/42
UN Squadron	20/39

Genesis

Mega Drive Converter	16
688 Attack Sub	22/45
Abrams Battle Tank	18/36
Alien Storm	16/34
Arcus Odyssey	22/47
Art Alive	15/30
Batman	14/35
Battle Master	20/40
Block Out	14/29
Bonanza Brothers	15/30
Caliber .50	20/40
Castle Of Illusion	19/42
Centurion	10/20
Crossfire	17/36
Dark Castle	12/27
DecapAttack	16/32
Dino Land	17/35
El Viento	24/45
F22 Interceptor	17/35
Fantasia	19/40
Fatal Rewind	17/35
Faery Tale Adventure	10/29
Gaiares	21/43
Golden Axe II	20/40
Hard Ball	15/37
Immortal	20/44
Jewel Master	17/35
Joe Montana 2	22/42
John Madden 92	18/40
Ka Ge Ki	17/35
Lakers vs Celtics	19/38
M. Lemieux Hockey	20/40
Marvel Land	18/39
Master Of Monsters	25/47
Mercs	20/43
Might & Magic	20/44
M. Ditka Football	14/35
Ms. Pacman	16/35
NHL Hockey	22/41
OutRun	22/40
PGA Golf	24/47
Phantasy Star III	12/42
Pit Fighter	22/44
Quack Shot	22/37
Quad Challenge	19/40
Raiden Trad	20/44
RBI Baseball 3	18/40
Road Rash	19/39
Saint Sword	15/38
Shadow Of The Beast	24/42
Shining In Darkness	25/50
Sonic The Hedgehog	12/35
Space Invaders 91	12/29
Speedball 2	17/35
Spiderman	24/43
Star Control	20/45
Starflight	25/52
Storm Lord	14/32
Streets Of Rage	22/38
Street Smart	20/40
Sword Of Vermillion	15/33
Thunder Fox	18/38
Toe Jam & Earl	19/42
Trouble Shooter	16/33
Twin Cobra	16/36
Ultimate Qix	15/33
Vapor Trail	20/44
Wings Of Wor	17/37

Game Boy

Aerostar	12/20
All Star Challenge	14/24
Altered Space	12/20
Atomic Punk	12/22
Bases Loaded	9/15
Batman	13/22
Battle Bull	7/19
Battle Toads	11/22
Battle Unit Zeoth	12/19
Bill & Ted's Adv.	12/20
Blades Of Steel	14/25
Bo Jackson, 2 In 1	14/24
Bubble Bobble	14/24
Bug's Crazy Castle II	14/24
Burgertime Deluxe	11/19
Castlevania II	13/22
Ceasars Palace	12/20
Chess Master	12/19
Choplifter II	12/19
Double Dragon II	12/21
Dragon's Lair	12/19
Duck Tales	13/22
Final Fantasy Leg. II	16/28
Gauntlet II	15/25
Ghost Busters II	12/22
Godzilla	11/18
Gogo Tank	10/18
Home Alone	14/24
Hunt For Red October	11/19
In Your Face	10/18
Ishido	12/19
Jeopardy	13/20
Klax	10/19
Kung Fu Master	10/19
Marble Madness	14/24
Megaman	14/21
Mercenary Force	8/15
Mickey's Chase	10/19
Navy Seals	11/19
Ninja Boy	10/19
Ninja Gaiden Shadow	12/21
Nobunaga's Ambition	11/20
North & South	14/23
Operation C	14/22
Pac Man	14/21
Paperboy	13/22
Princess Blobette	11/19
Punisher	13/22
Robo Cop 2	14/24
Shanghai	8/17
Simpsons	12/20
Sneaky Snake	13/21
Snoopys Magic Show	12/19
Solomon's Club	10/18
Space Invaders	10/18
Spiderman	14/24
Spot	12/22
Super Scrabble	11/19
Sword Of Hope	12/20
Tail Gator	13/22
Tasmania Story	11/18
Tecmo Bowl	14/22
Tour de Thrash	11/19
Wheel Of Fortune	10/19
Who Framed Roger	12/22
World Boxing	11/20
World Cup Soccer	10/18
WWF Superstars	10/19

Turbo Grafx

PC Engine Converter	29
Addams Family	22/45
Aero Blasters	18/36
Alien Crush	9/18
A. Panza Kick Boxing	19/37
Battle Royale	17/34
Blazing Lazers	9/18
Bloody Wolf	14/28
Bomberman	12/29
Bonk's Adventure	12/24
Bonk's Revenge	17/37
Boxy Boy	17/34
Bravoman	11/22
Cadash	20/43
Champions Boxing	19/41
China Warrior	11/22
Cybercore	13/26
Davis Cup Tennis	17/36
Deep Blue	12/24
Devil's Crush	16/33
Double Dungeon	13/26
Dragon's Curse	10/20
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Impossamole	19/39
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King Of Casino	16/32
Klax	11/22
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Mag Dino. Tour (CD)	14/29
Military Madness	20/41
Moto Roader	14/28
Neutopia	14/28
Nicklaus Turbo Golf	12/29
Ninja Spirit	12/24
Parasol Stars	19/39
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Sinistron	10/24
Sonic Spike	9/19
Space Harrier	12/24
Splatter House	14/28
Super Star Soldier	14/39
Super Volleyball	10/25
Tail Spin	21/42
Taking It To The Hoop	5/12
Tiger Road	12/24
Timeball	10/25
Tricky Kick	8/24
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Vigilante	10/19
World Class Baseball	9/18
World Court Tennis	8/19
Y's Book I & II (CD)	15/29
Y's Book III (CD)	19/39
Yo' Bro	18/38

Mega Drive

Beast Warriors	22/50
Dahna	22/48
Dangerous Seed	12/37
Devils Crash	18/44
Devil Hunter Yoko	4/22
Elemental Master	15/34
Ernest Evans (CD)	25/54
Fastest 1	15/44
Fatman	15/49
Fighting Masters	20/45
Galaxy Force II	20/49
Heavy Nova (CD)	25/49
Kabuki	18/44
Magical Hat	6/19
Master Of Weapon	18/37
Mega Panel	16/40
New Zealand Story	8/22
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Rainbow Island	12/36
Ring Side Angel	15/49
Runark	20/44
Sol Feace (CD)	25/49
Spaceship Gomola	18/44
Super League 91	15/45
Twin Tiger	20/46
Undead Line	22/49
Verytex	15/49
Wonderboy V	18/44
Wrestle War	20/42

PC Engine

Afterburner II	17/39
Avenger (CD)	18/45
Blue Blink	16/35
Burning Anger	17/55
Circus Lido	18/42
Coryoon	20/45
Dead Moon	15/30
Download	18/36
Dragon Egg!	20/44
Fighting Run	22/48
Final Soldier	12/34
Gradius	20/45
HellFire (CD)	15/35
Hit The Ice	20/45
Jackie Chan	16/45
Legend Of DekoBoku	17/44
Legend Hero Tonma	15/39
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overcome the bad first impression. NEC isn't finished with home electronic gaming, but the TG-16 doesn't look like its ticket to a large slice of the business. Hopefully, the possible introduction of the Duo in the U.S. will make up for it.

The Genesis has a year head start on the Super NES, and that advantage paid off in the cartridges premiered for last Christmas. Developers have had more time to master the idiosyncrasies of the Genesis and learn to exploit its capabilities.

In the past, it took the techies a year or so to get comfortable with a new system. It is sometimes said that old generals are always prepared to fight the next war, as long as it's exactly like the last one. It's the same way with programmers. They are fully versed in the now-obsolete system, and they're only just starting to find out about the new one.

The first batch of cartridges for a new system often consists of products that were under development before the new hardware came on stream. Even when early titles are created expressly for the new system, few programmers have had enough experience at that stage to do more than a fancier version of the best stuff done for the previous hardware unit.

Genesis titles made a tremendous jump in quality last autumn. *ToeJam & Earl* and *Joe Montana II* aren't flukes; they're the leading edge of a tidal wave of incredible new games for Sega's pride and joy. Look for a lot more Genesis cartridges to be "Born in the USA."

Third-party publishers won't all progress as rapidly as Sega of America. The console manufacturer has a comprehensive overview of the field that no independent publisher who does four titles a year can equal. There will be a quality gap between companies trying to produce state-of-the-art carts and those content to market slightly revised editions of games already on the shelves of Japanese stores.

The first group of contests for the Super NES didn't make gamers turn cartwheels. Only *Pilotwings* drew raves. *Super Mario World* got good notices from critics, but even its biggest fans admit they'd hoped for more of a departure from the tried-and-true, side-scrolling, 8-bit mold.

Video gamers will forget any disappointment by next fall. Super NES games that vie with Genesis' best are on the way!

More games will have both Genesis and Super NES editions. Cross-system publishing will rebound after a low period, which is great news for electronic-gaming fans everywhere. Once again, we'll all be able to enjoy many of the same games, no matter which system we own.

No one brand of 16-bit console is likely to approach the size of the old NES market, but Genesis and Super NES together make an audience worth targeting with ads on radio and television and in major consumer magazines.

Multimedia Games

CD-based interactive entertainment is coming to the consumer market in a big way this year, but no one can guess which of the delivery systems will capture the public's allegiance. There are, or currently are being developed, CD peripherals for all three video-game systems, CD-ROM drives for home computers and freestanding "black boxes" that plug into television sets.

The big problem is that, so far, no one has made any games of note for any of these systems. That will definitely change during the next 12 months, though whether the quality of the games will improve enough to create big demand for CD by the end of 1992 is debatable.

Many experts predict that the stand-alone type of CD machine will ultimately win, but the video-game CD is more likely to get off to a good start this year. Video-game manufacturers would love to kick carts in favor of compact discs, because they are so much cheaper than the expensive ROMs they now use, and the resulting lower retail price would promote market expansion.

This year's CD video games won't be much better than the 8-megabit games on cartridge, though they'll have enhanced sound and possibly more levels. Bold new vistas in video gaming must wait until at least 1993.

Computer-software publishers are ready for the multimedia personal computer. The trickle of new CD-ROM games will increase slightly through 1992, as more companies make their CD debuts. Most of the new games will be adventures or intricate simulators, though a lot of action-oriented shovelware is in the cards.

Computer Games

The buzzword for 1992 is "upgrade." That's what every game-loving computerist with less than the latest gear will be doing. Those who don't, will miss the best of the new games. And no one will enjoy the lengthy installation procedures that these multidisk wonders require.

Once they're safely in the hard disk, though, it should be gaming heaven. We're talking about games with 20 megabytes or more of data.

Genres that have favored content over audiovisual impact, like role-playing games and sports simulations, are going to look and sound better. Publishers are preparing for the coming CD-ROM boom, and they will practice on state-of-the-art computer software until the multimedia market takes off.

There will be more IBM PC compatible games in 1992, and quite a few will come out in editions that work with Windows. Sales of hardware are strong, so publishers will step up development to support the growing audience.

Other computers? The 1992 outlook isn't bright. Many computer games won't appear on the Amiga, and even fewer will have ST editions this year. There's little stateside development for either system, so most of the titles will be versions of European games. The Macintosh entertainment software market won't change much: an occasional good game, but not much selection.

Overall Outlook

It'll be a turbulent year for electronic gaming. Every segment is in ferment, with lots of innovative equipment trying to gain a place in the sun. The state of the national economy could determine the fate of the new hardware.

The high visibility of the NES video-game market will ebb, but gaming will remain the hobby of millions, if not tens of millions. And, at this time next year, I hope I'm not writing a column to alibi my most wayward predictions. That's one thing we can always expect from electronic gaming—the unexpected. Would you have it any other way?

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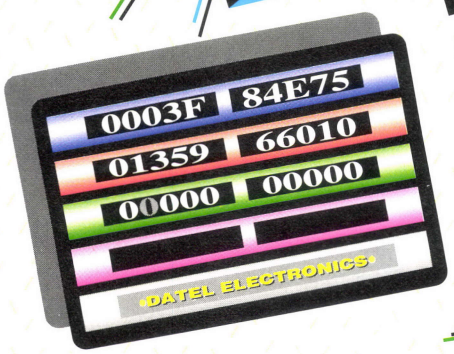

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From World to World

A PLAYER'S GUIDE TO

PHANTASY STAR III

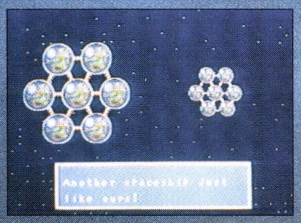
PART 3

Well, here we are, at long last approaching the end of our extensive journey. In this month's Phantasy Star III strategy, we'll follow the adventures of the third-generation characters, and, by the time we're through, we will have reached the end of the game and destroyed Dark Force, the scariest boss demon in this or any other universe.

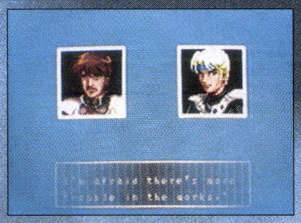
WARNING: The following photo essay tells you everything you need to know to complete the third-generation quest. Readers who want to solve as much of the game as they can on their own should avoid reading too much of this article, since it gives away many of the game's secrets.

by Clayton Walnum

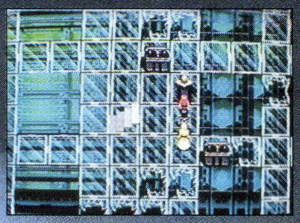
Last month, we left off with the marriage of Nial and Alair.



Now, we'll take up the story right after the wedding, when another spaceship is attacking Alisa III.

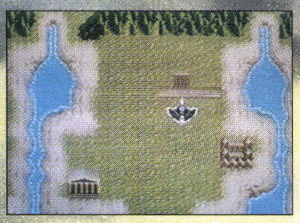


One thing's for sure, there's more trouble on the way.

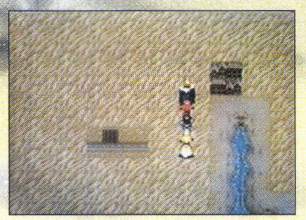


After the attack, and after you form your new party, explore Dahlia's dungeon.

...it is on the landing strips that you can transform into an aerojet, which allows you to fly over the countryside, avoiding battles and exploring.

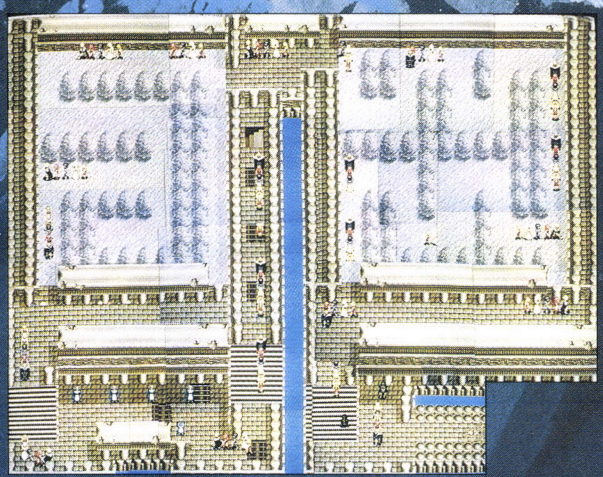


Although the aerojet makes it possible for you to explore large areas quickly, you can only land it on a landing strip.



Your next stop should be the world of Aridia. Just south of the town of Hazatak is the secret entrance to Laya's world. Go there and enlist Laya's help.

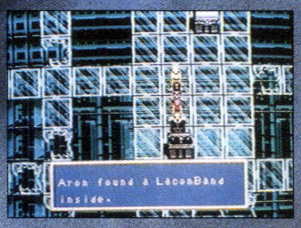
As you travel across Aridia, you'll discover that the monsters have become much more powerful.



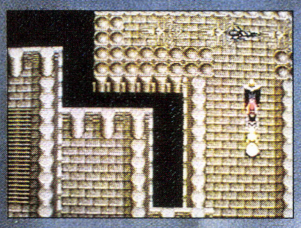
The floating city of Skyhaven holds many important secrets.

In Skyhaven, talk to the Council. They have important information.

In Skyhaven's dungeon, you'll battle some strange villains.



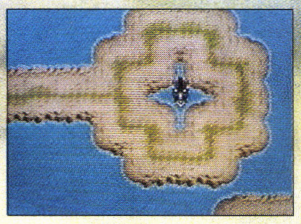
In the dungeon, you'll find many useful items, including the aero parts, without which you will not get far into the third part of the adventure.



After finding the aero parts, get back to your rocket shuttle...

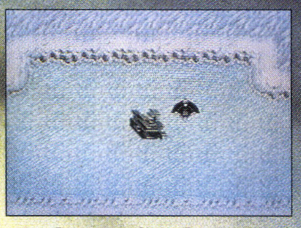
...and return to Aerone, where you can get some rest and restock your supplies.

Now that you have the aero parts, you should take note of all the landing strips, because...

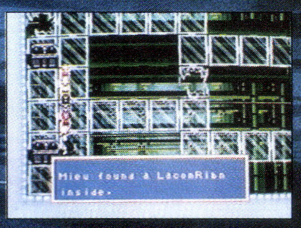


When Wren transforms into a submersible, you'll be able to get to Laya's world, where you'll find her in her temple.

After Laya joins your quest, find your way to Frigidia...

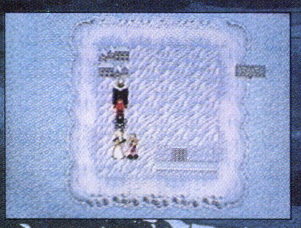


...where, thanks to the aero parts, you can now reach the floating city of Skyhaven.

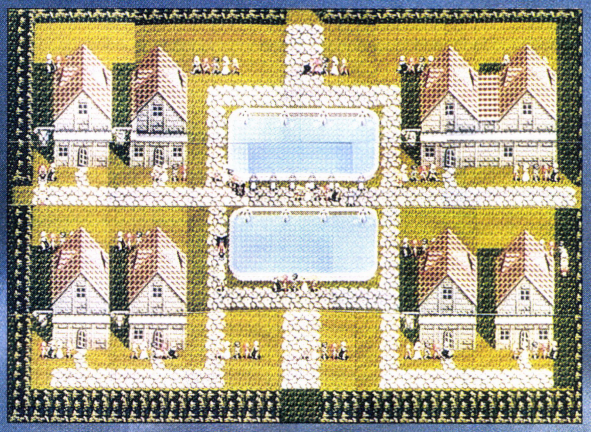


You'll also find helpful objects...

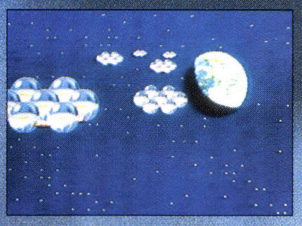
...as well as the aquaparts, which allow you to cross ocean areas.



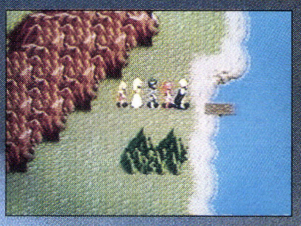
Use the aero parts to get to the town of New Mota, which is nestled on a small island in Frigidia.



In New Mota, you'll find all the usual services, as well as an interesting story.

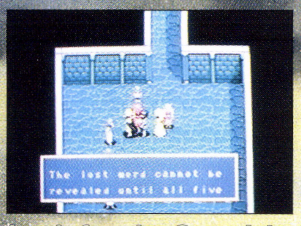


When you talk to the people in New Mota, they'll give you a lesson in history.



Next stop: Aquatica, where you should find this dock and transform Wren into an aquaskimmer.

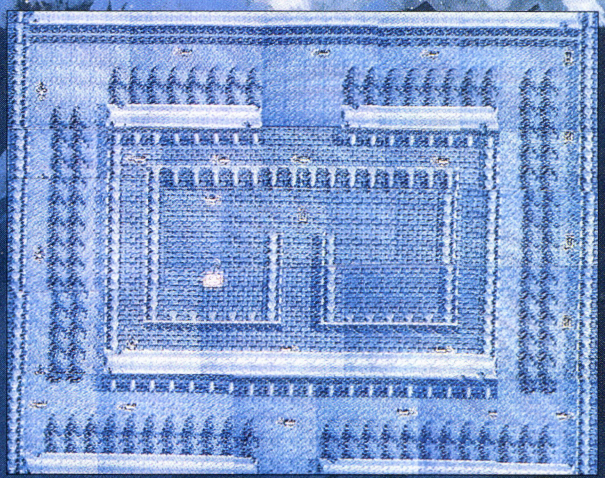
In the dungeon, plan to take on some tough foes. If you have a hard time, you may need to first increase your levels a little.



Look for the Sage Isle sages, which you'll find in the dungeon. Talk to them, and get their story.

Also look for Siren, who has a tale of his own to tell.

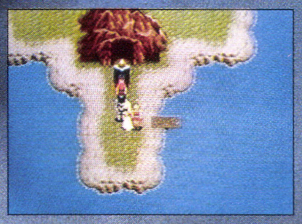
After completing Sage Isle Dungeon, find your way to Landen, where you'll battle a new host of enemies.



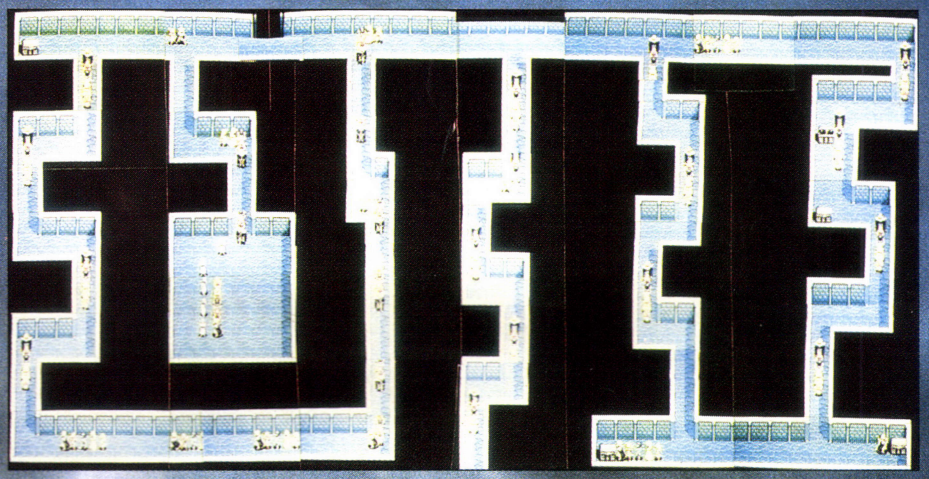
When the aquaskimmer is over the sunken palace, it automatically transforms into the submersible, which lets you dive down to the sunken palace and enter its gates. In the palace, you'll find Orakio's Sword.

After getting the sword in the sunken palace, travel back to Aridia.

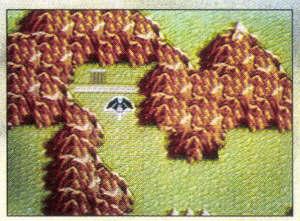
Find this lady wandering the desert. Her name is Miun, and when she sees Orakio's sword...



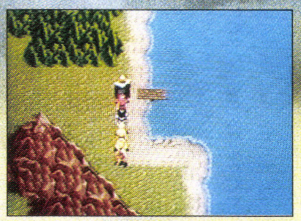
Then use the aquaskimmer to locate Sage Isle, which hides this cave.



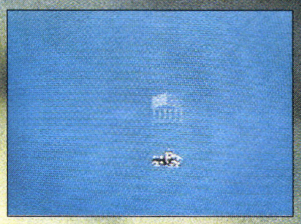
The Sage Isle Dungeon is not as complex as some of the others you've had to find your way through.



On Landen, look for this landing strip, which...



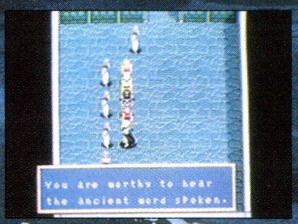
...allows you to land close to this dock.



Use the dock to transform Wren into the aquaskimmer, and then look for this sunken palace.

...she will become more talkative.

Miun will then give you the last of the legendary weapons.

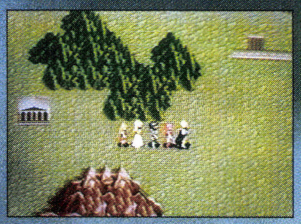


Now that you have all five legendary weapons, return to Sage Isle. The sages have more to say.

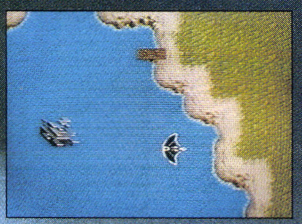
Whew! You sure have to do a lot of traveling. After seeing the sages again, it's back to Skyhaven to receive the word of power.

The legendary weapons are extremely powerful. Be sure to equip each of the characters with one of them.

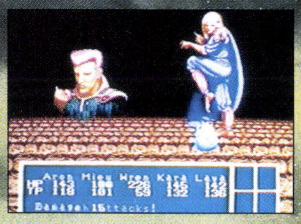
In Frigidia, start your final conquest by finding this palace.



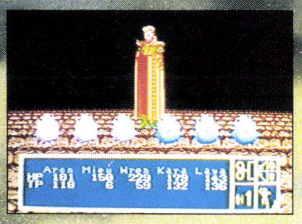
The palace delivers you here to this empty world, which has only one city.



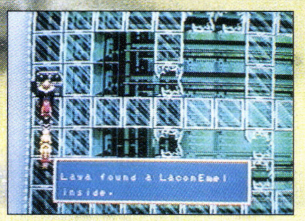
Use the aero parts to reach the floating city of Lashute.



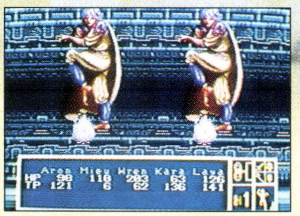
Lashute is bursting with evil foes, some of which can kill weaker characters with one attack. Make sure that you keep your characters' hit points restored.



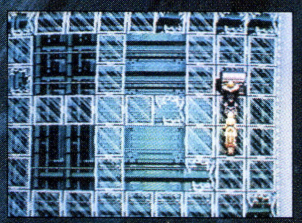
Before you can get into Lashute's dungeon, you must defeat Rulakir, who guards the entrance.



In the dungeon, there are many treasures.



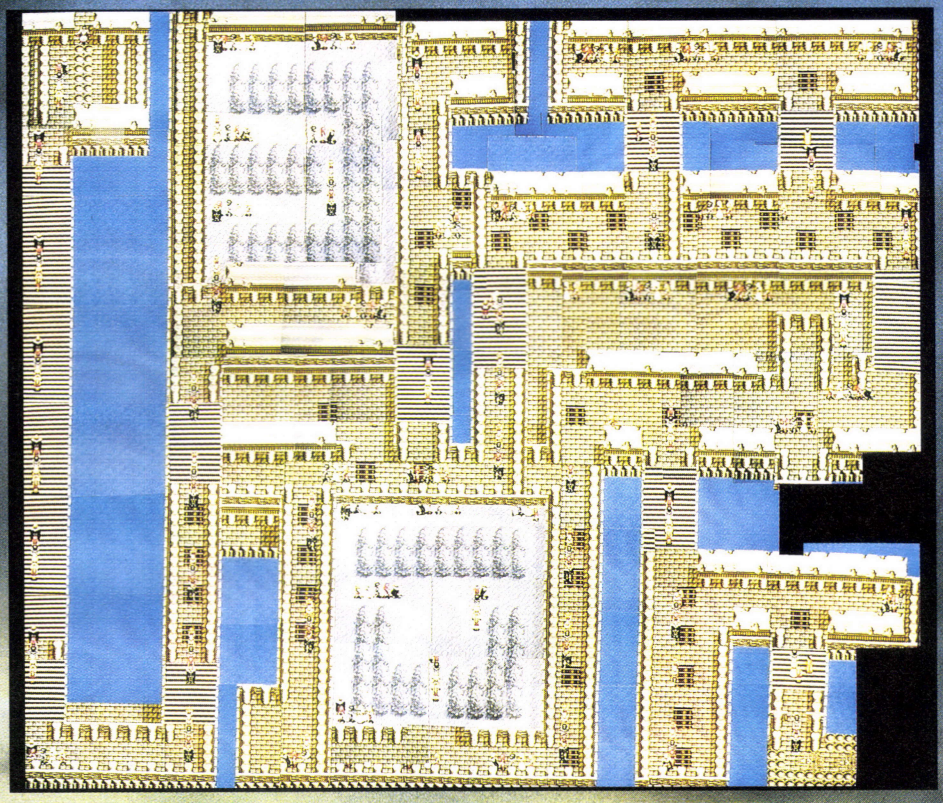
There are also many powerful enemies.



When you find this chest, don't open it until you have restored all your hit points, because...

...the chest opens the hiding place of the ultimate evil, the creature called Dark Force.

At first, Dark Force may seem impossible to beat, since he keeps healing himself. However, if you concentrate your first attacks on the right claw, you'll have an easier time.



Lashute, the last area you must complete in the game, is the largest city yet. It may take you a little while to find your way to your destination, King Rulakir.

Following the death of Dark Force, the city will fall down around you.

Luckily, at the last minute, your party of adventurers gets transported to the last spaceship.

Your destination? This strangely familiar planet called Earth. What types of adventures will you face there? We won't know until the release of *Phantasy Star IV*.

SPACE 1992:

FUTURISTIC FUNWARE

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVE WARREN

Some call it science fiction, others like the term sci-fi. Whatever the label, games with futuristic themes have never lost their ability to fascinate. Sci-fi games have maintained a consistently high level of popularity, unmatched by any other theme, and futuristic games have the largest share of the market.

The association between science fiction and computing stretches back before the invention of the first vacuum-tube monster calculators in the 1940s. Robots and artificial brains were staples during the 1930s' golden age of science fiction, when series like Eando Binder's *Adam Link* robot stories ranked among the readers' favorites.

It was natural for computer pioneers at MIT to turn to science fiction for the theme of the first computer game. *Spacewar* was an outer-space shooter with strategic elements, designed to demonstrate programming techniques and hardware capabilities.

That's a pattern that holds true right to the present day. When electronic gaming takes a leap forward, it likes the safety net of doing it with a sci-fi game. *Space Invaders*, *Asteroids*, *Star Raiders*, *Wing Commander* and *Time Traveler* are just some of the futuristic contests that have signaled major advances in the art and science of electronic gaming.

VG&CE'S SURVEY OF SCIENCE-FICTION GAMES

A QUESTION OF CONTENT

How good are sci-fi games? That depends on your perspective. No one argues against the high quality and playability of the best of current sci-fi video and computer games, but the *content* is more controversial. Those steeped in written science fiction, or even the electronic versions seen on television and in movies, often complain that the speculative element of most games is irritatingly primitive.

Noninteractive sci-fi is known for innovative concepts, mind-boggling predictions and a special feeling called the "Sense of Wonder." Futuristic cartridges and disks often stun the senses with fantastic audiovisuals and challenging play mechanics, but they seldom contain thoughts and concepts that have a comparable impact on the players' minds.

Publishers *are* presenting more interesting stories and themes than in the late 1980s, so there's at least some cause for optimism. Science-fiction writers haven't done much in gaming so far, but this is likely to change as the ability of the hardware to present a detailed and fully textured world grows.

It's impossible to cover all the recent and soon-to-be-published sci-fi games, but let's look at some recent highlights and forthcoming winners.

SPACED-OUT SHOOTERS

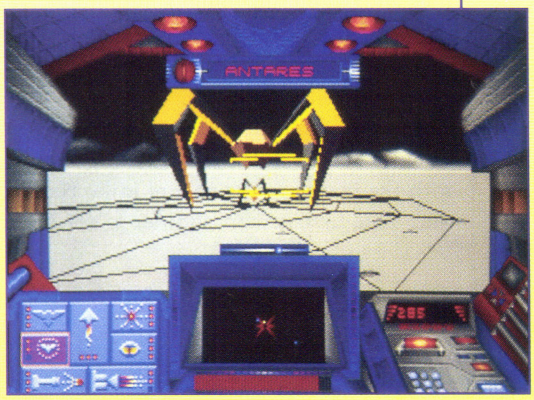
The action-game format doesn't allow for a lot of plot and characterization, so science-fiction shoot-'em-ups usually have more of the *feel* rather than the actual *substance* of science fiction. It's obviously an ambience players love, because spaceships, robots and other futuristic features are found in dozens of computer and video games.

Elite Plus (MicroPlay for the IBM PC) is the sequel to *Elite*, the well-remembered space exploration and trading game. The 1991 version adds an icon-based control scheme, enhanced sound and polygon 3-D graphics. *Elite Plus* also has six missions, twice as many as the 1986 release.

Super R-Type (Irem America for the Super NES) enhances the 1989 arcade space-combat classic to exploit the capabilities of Nintendo's 16-bit system. The Bydo Empire is still on the warpath, and it'll take a maximum effort from heroic R-9 to stem the tide of alien invasion. Like the original *R-Type*, this 16-bit version boasts breathtaking sound and graphics.

One starfighter against a universe of trouble is the theme of *Earth Defense Force* (Jaleco for the Super NES). The XA-1 can mount eight different weapons, and there are five power-ups for each in this six-level shooter.

Nova 9 (Dynamix for the Amiga and IBM PC) has many aspects of a simulator, but the play-system is so smooth and intuitive that most players will find it as easy to learn as the typical arcade-style combat title. Nine unexplored planets are the battlefield as the *Raven II* tries to stop Gir Draxon's second bid to conquer the known universe. *Nova 9* is a must for the many admirers of *Stellar 7*.



Dynamix's popular *Stellar 7*.

High-speed space racing provides the excitement in *Hyper Zone* (HAL America for the Super NES). Graphics inspired by Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* make this first-person flier one of the most exciting games yet produced for Nintendo's 16-bit console.

Combat mixes with auto racing in *Road Blasters* (Tengen for the Genesis). The gamer takes the wheel of a high-performance car and battles for survival on the deadly roads of a future America. Special weapons and a horde of speedy and powerful foes energize this rugged road war contest.

The lighter side of science fiction comes to the forefront in *ToeJam & Earl* (Sega for the Genesis), a one- or two-player action adventure in angled side-perspective. When these two hip-hop spacefarers crash on a planet, they must brave menaces that include the dread hula girls, the mischievous cupids and worse, to collect all ten pieces. There may not be a better video game for adults.

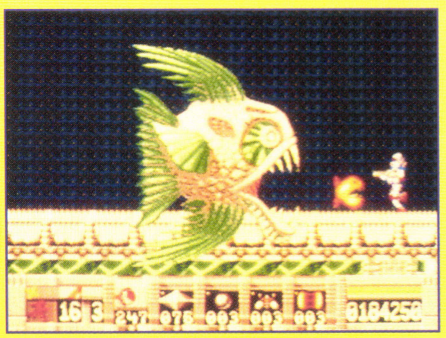
In *Quantum Fighter* (HAL America for the NES), a planetary defense computer that guards Earth is infected by a constantly mutating virus, and it's up to the hero Kabuki to save the Earth. There are lots of weapons and power-ups to ease the way through six levels of fighting. The action goes right into the circuits to set things right.

The computer is big, bad and berserk in the oddly named *Cyber-Lip* (SNK for the Neo•Geo). The graphics and sound are awesome in this free-for-all fight. Also for the Neo•Geo is SNK's *Super Spy*, which features screen-filling animated images in first-person perspective.

Metal Mech (Jaleco for the NES) is a side-scroller with two modes of play that enable the gamer to both control a superpowered combat vehicle and explore the world on foot. The sci-fi shooter stars one of the few survivors of an alien invasion in a last-ditch effort to unshackle the Earth from this tyranny.

Simultaneous two-player action awaits players of *Crackdown* (Sage's Creation for the Genesis). When a facility that makes artificial lifeforms comes under the control of an evil genius, the volunteer hero must fight more than a thousand foes before the complex can be liberated.

A bioengineered warrior stars in *Turrican* (Ballistic for the Genesis and TG-16). More than 1,300 screens, populated by 50 types of enemies, challenge the hero on five different worlds. The hero has an arsenal at his command, including the ability to turn into a buzz saw, in this side-perspective blastathon.



Ballistic's *Turrican* is part of Accolade's new line of games for the Genesis.

BY ARNIE KATZ

Rotox (U.S. Gold for the Amiga and IBM PC) introduces a new technology that produces a 360-degree, rotating play-environment. As a cyborg, the player must prove his ability in ten landscapes, each with nine sectors full of mayhem bent creatures and machines.

Wurm: Journey to the Center of the Earth (Asmik for the NES) proves that all the excitement isn't among the stars or inside the circuits of a computer. Scientists of the year 1999 bore to the heart of the planet to find out what's behind the increase in earthquakes, volcanoes and other geological catastrophes in this duo-directional scroller.

IT CAME FROM THE MEDIA

Licensed science-fiction games abound in both video and computer gaming. Basing a game on a sci-fi story, TV show or movie already well-known to most players makes the game easier to learn and understand.

As Captain Kirk blasts into cinematic outer space for the *last* time in *Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country*, publishers have brought forth video and computer games celebrating the 25th anniversary of the most popular sci-fi television series of all time.

STAR TREK: The 25th Anniversary (Interplay for the IBM PC) combines a 3-D spaceflight simulator with the opportunity to guide Kirk, McCoy and Spock on missions to explore many uncharted worlds. Digitized model graphics and sound effects sampled from the television series make this latest *Star Trek* computer game perhaps the most faithful adaptation of this license.

Star Trek (Ultra for the NES) is a seven-level action game in which the player becomes Captain Kirk in an adventure in which the *Enterprise* has been swept into an uncharted region of space due to a malfunction. The player can beam down to strange planets and duel with aliens and Romulans in deep space.

Star Wars and *The Empire Strikes Back* (JVC/Lucasfilm for the NES) are the latest interactive versions of the great sci-fi adventure movies. These action-adventures feature multiple gaming perspectives, outstanding graphics and sound and a close connection to the movies of the same titles.

The Terminator (Bethesda for the IBM PC) casts the gamer as either time-traveler Kyle Reese, attempting to save Sarah Connor, *or* the Terminator determined to kill her, in the epic struggle between the urban commando and the perfect killer man-machine. The 3-D representation of Los Angeles provides a stunning backdrop to this action-adventure in which the player must display both clever strategy and combat skill.

The cyborg also stars in *Terminator 2* (Virgin Games for the Genesis), the video-game version of the 1991 movie smash.

Back to the Future, Part III (Konami for the Amiga, Commodore 64 and IBM PC) shows the lighter side of time-travel. Marty McFly visits the Old West in 1885 to save his mentor, Doc Brown, in this multi-scenario arcade title.

Predator 2 (Konami for the NES) puts the action-movie hit into gaming terms with the player in the role of Mike Harrigan. This first-person shooter is set in a near-future Los Angeles, where the hero must also contend with a drug war.

Although the movie wasn't quite as much of a blockbuster as its predecessor, the electronic-game version of *RoboCop 2* (Data East for the Amiga and NES) makes maximum use of the license to produce an intense action experience. As in the movie, the cyborg must defeat evildoers bent on taking over Detroit.

***The Rocketeer*, one of last summer's big movies, is available in many game formats.**

A superb comic-book series and a mediocre movie inspired *The Rocketeer* (Disney for the IBM PC; Bandai for the NES; and IGS for the Super NES). The 1930s flying hero straps on the rocket pack to rescue his starlet girlfriend from the Nazis in this action-adventure.

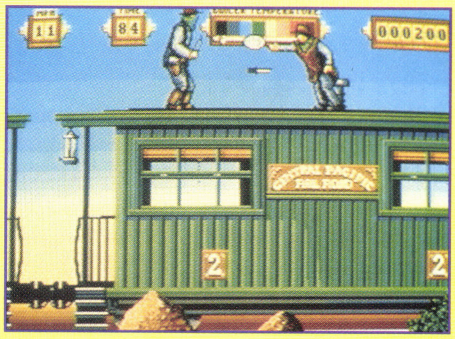
Environmental crimes are the domain of *Captain Planet and the Planeteers* (Mindscape for the NES). As the super-doer of the TV cartoon show, the player prevents environmental disasters by performing heroics ranging from rescuing dolphins to stopping nuclear plant meltdowns.

Everyone's favorite baghead, Bart Simpson, is the unlikely savior of Springfield when aliens assault his town in *Bart Simpson vs. the Space Mutants* (Acclaim for the NES). He races through town, spotting aliens and painting the town a protective color in this charming side-scroller.

Defenders of Dynatron City (JVC/Lucasfilm for the NES) stars a team of mutant superheroes who protect the futuristic Dynatron City from the menace of the mad genius Dr. Mayhem. Lucasfilm Games based the cartridge on a concept that is intended to become a network animated television show next fall.

Now computerists can enjoy the most famous nonelectronic, sci-fi, role-playing games, *MegaTraveller* and *MegaTraveller 2* (Paragon for the IBM PC). Marc Miller, designer of the original RPG, designed both games. *MegaTraveller 2: Quest for the Ancients*', icon-driven interface

Left: *Star Trek*, by Ultra, for the NES. Below: Konami's *Back to the Future, Part III* for the Amiga, C-64 and IBM PC. Bottom: *Predator 2*, by Konami, for the NES.



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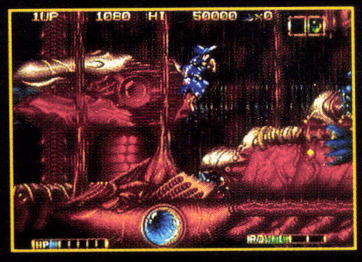

Magician Lord

Baseball Stars Professional

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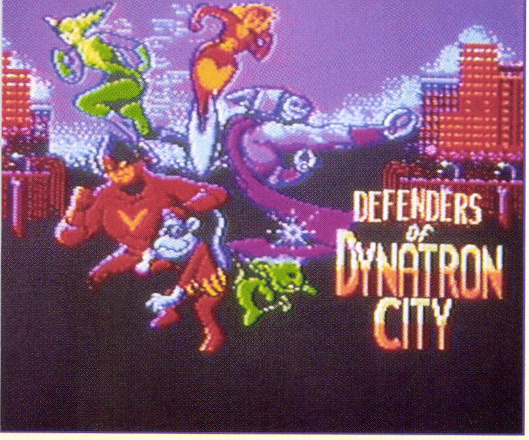
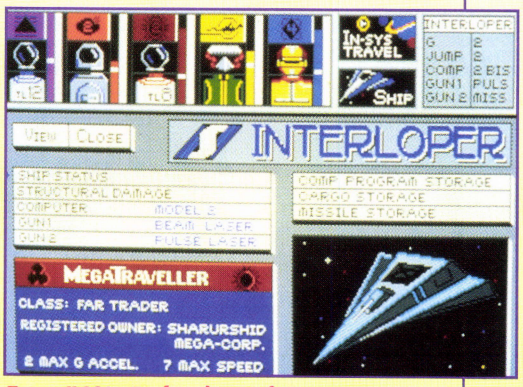




Top: JVC's *Defenders of Dynatron City*. Top right: *RoboSport*, by Maxis. Above: *MegaTraveller*, by Paragon.

and excellent visuals make it surprisingly simple to control one character while commanding four others in a quest that spans 100 worlds.

Renegade Legion: Interceptor (SSI for the Amiga and IBM PC) is the computer version of the FASA sci-fi board game. There are 24 types of starfighters included in this glimpse into the future of warfare, and the user also has the option of creating customized configurations.

THE SHAPE OF FUTURE SPORTS

Speedball 2 (Konami for the Amiga and IBM PC; Arena for the Genesis) is the best futuristic athletic contest available for the Sega Genesis. There's a 16-team league, the WSL, to entertain one or two players in this test of speed and strength. Vastly improved sound and graphics far surpass the original, published in this country by Spotlight. With a choice of equipment and three separate game modes, *Speedball 2* is sure to delight futuristic-sports lovers.

What do you get when you mix martial arts, wrestling and football? You get *Powerball* (Namco for the Genesis), which combines hand-to-hand combat with goal scoring in a top/down perspective, grueling sport of tomorrow. The cartridge offers players a choice of 12 different teams, each with unique sets of players.

RoboSport (Maxis for the IBM PC and Macintosh) is a group of five variations rather than one specific sport. Players control teams of up to eight robots in sports combat against either computer or human opposition. The game also supports networked play over a modem.

Cyberball (Jaleco for the NES), based on the Atari Games coin-op, is 21st-century football, with robots wearing the helmets and shoulder pads. Video gamers can play solitaire, head to head or with two players cooperating against machine opposition.

Klash Bowl (Sofel for the NES) offers a 23rd-century sport that has elements of football, rugby and gang warfare. Top/down graphics keep players on top of the action as the five-man teams compete to score goals with a three-kilo metallic energy sphere.

What *Klash Bowl* does for the gridiron, *Base Wars* (Ultra for the NES) does for the diamond. This one- or two-player contest warps the standard baseball rules into a crunching contest played by armed and aggressive robots. The cartridge has an onboard battery that saves teams and statistics between play sessions.

RollerGames (Ultra for the NES) is a cross between Roller Derby and an action-adventure. The player uses Derby-style moves through six levels of action to defeat V.I.P.E.R. (Vicious International Punks and Eternal Renegades), as the battle moves through jungles, sewers and city streets.

SPECULATIVE SIMULATORS

A lot of the sci-fi content of games is pretty fanciful, more like the science fantasy of the *Star Wars* trilogy than the tightly reasoned future of an Asimov or Heinlein novel. Simulators are exceptions; they're detailed extrapolations. No one can confidently predict technology, but simulators make an honest effort to put the gamer at the controls of a vehicle that might actually exist years from now.

Straddling the gray dividing line between present and future is *Space Shuttle Project* (Absolute Entertainment for the NES). John Van Ryzin, who has designed several previous games with a sci-fi motif, offers players a selection of missions, some of them modeled on actual shuttle flights.

Today's benchmark space-combat game for the home computer is *Wing Commander II* (Origin Systems for the IBM PC). Chris Roberts lost no time in building on the breakthroughs he made in *Wing Commander*, and the new title shows how well he and the rest of the Origin team learned the lessons of the original. The audiovisual effects are better, the cut scenes are longer and more dramatic and the missions provide irresistible challenge.

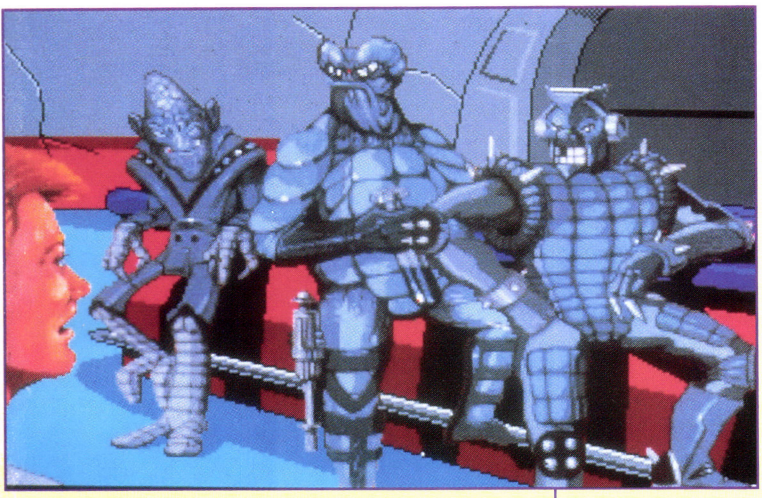
HoverForce (Accolade for the Amiga and IBM PC) bolsters its simulation of ground-effect vehicles with role-playing elements. The Red Wasp Unit battles the Alterants, bloodthirsty crime lords who traffic in the illegal substance known as Aftershock. The player flashes down city streets to battle evil in the HoverKill 1000 urban assault craft.

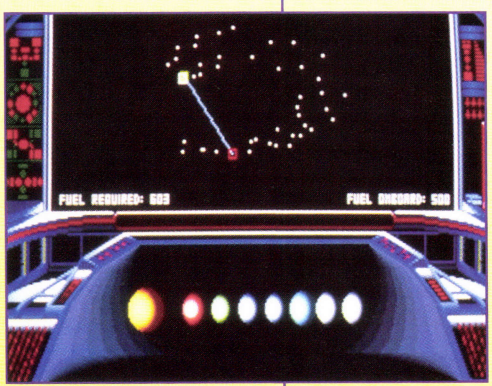
HoverForce, by Accolade, for the Amiga and IBM PC.

ADVENTURES BEYOND TOMORROW

Lighthearted space opera is the stock-in-trade of two guys from Andromeda, the design team behind the *Space Quest* series. Mark Crowe and Scott Murphy have now produced four tales of Roger Wilco, a spacefaring maintenance man who always seems to wind up in the thick of the trouble.

Space Quest I, the parser-driven graphics adventure that started it all, is now available in a revised edition that brings sound and graphics up to current state-of-the-art. Helping Roger find the Star





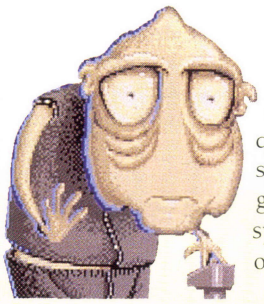
Above: Sierra On-Line's *Space Quest I.* Above right: *Starflight II,* by Electronic Arts. Right: MicroProse's *Hyperspeed.*

Generator is more fun than ever now that *Space Quest I* has animated color graphics, full soundboard support and a mouse-driven interface.

Space Quest IV (Sierra On-Line for the Amiga, IBM PC and Macintosh), in which the goal is to rescue the two guys from Andromeda who have been kidnapped by the money-grubbing fiends at Scumsoft, is now slated to become one of Sierra On-Line's first multimedia titles.

Starflight I and *II* (Electronic Arts for the Amiga, Atari ST, IBM PC and Macintosh), both by Binary Software, are a little tough to classify, since they have lots of strategy and adventuring. The player can talk, trade or fight in encounters on hundreds of worlds included in these two fine titles. The first game ends with the destruction of the Crystal Planet, while the second takes the gamer to the mysterious worlds of the cloud nebula.

Hyperspeed (MicroProse for the IBM PC) expands and enhances the concepts introduced in 1991's *Lightspeed*, from the same publisher. The player must find a new planet for the periled population of Earth, but it takes a lot of fighting, as well as exploring, to find a safe haven for humanity. *Hyperspeed* includes the two star clusters from *Lightspeed*, as well as two entirely new ones to investigate.



Top/down and first-person views of deep-space combat present the action in *Sentinel Worlds I: Future Magic* (Electronic Arts for the Commodore 64 and IBM PC), designed by Karl Buiter. The player must discover who is destroying spaceliners and put a stop to the destruction with a well-armed squad of interceptors.

Tex Murphy is rapidly becoming electronic gaming's most popular science-fiction detective. The intrepid gumshoe, who previously starred in *Mean Streets*, takes on a new case in *Martian Memorandum* (Access Software for the IBM PC). Advanced technology, including speech and full-motion video, make this interactive, cinematic adventure a real treat. An exciting story line, sparked with many humorous touches, keeps the action lively from Murphy's San Francisco base to outer space, as he tries to unravel the multilayered mystery.

Like the Tex Murphy titles, *Planet's Edge: The Point of No Return* (New World Computing for the IBM PC) is an adventure that also features a real-time flight simulator. The player can design his own spacecraft to search for clues to why the Earth has slipped into another space-time continuum.

A hoverbike simulator adds real-time action to *Killer Cloud* (Konami for the Amiga and IBM PC). Designed by Imageworks, this 21st-century adventure turns the player into a San Francisco police offer who must pierce the mists of the mysterious toxic cloud while battling crime lords of more earthly origin.

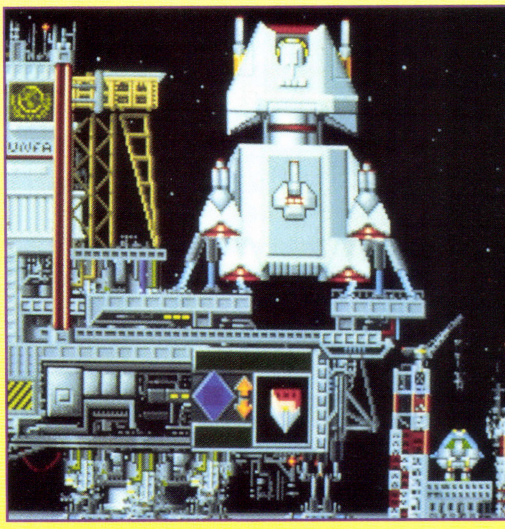
Twilight 2000 (MicroProse for the IBM PC), like the Games Designers Workshop nonelectronic RPG on which it is based, transports the player to the ravaged battlefields of post-World War III Poland. It incorporates top-down exploration and combat sequences, as well as first-person perspective vehicle simulation. The player generates characters with an icon-driven system, and leads a four-member party on missions in a chaotic Eastern Europe.

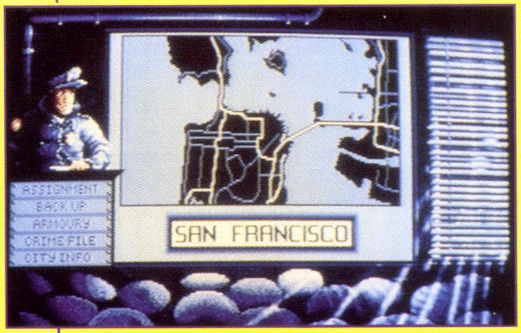
Cybercom (U.S. Gold for the Amiga and IBM PC) treats the concept of exploring the inside of a computer in the context of an action-adventure with colorful and distinctive 3-D graphics. Designer Ricardo Pini evokes memories of *The Forbin Project* and other tales of mad computers in this quest to rid 22nd-century Earth of a power-mad mechanical dictator.

A nuclear disaster that hurls Lester Knight Chaykin through space and time begins his *Out of This World* (Interplay for the Amiga and IBM PC) adventure. The polygon-fill graphics allow this action-adventure to create fully animated terrain in real time, as the hero battles alien monsters and earthquakes.

Players explore an extensive 16-level 3-D environment in *Corporation* (Virgin Games for the Amiga, Atari ST and IBM

Below: *Planet's Edge: The Point of No Return,* by New World Computing. Bottom: Konami's *Killer Cloud.*





continued on page 98

ADVERTISER INDEX

Advertiser	Page #	RSC #
Abbracadata	105	140
Access Software	62-63	132
Acclaim	7,23,31,35, 43	104
Accolade/Domark	109	141
ASCII Entertainment	47	123
Bignet USA, Inc.	40-41	120
BRE Software	115	144
Bullet-Proof Software	27	115
Camerica	69	134
Capcom USA	21	113
Coast to Coast	81	136
Culture Brain	49	124
Fun Co.	54-55	128
Fun 'n Games	115	143
Game Dude Club	79	135
Hudson Soft	9	105
IGS	60-61	131
Irem	18-19	111,112
Jaleco	118	147
Kemco-Seika	BC,39	149,119
Konami	IFC,4	101,103
Namco	IBC	148
New England Services	113	142
Ocean America	53,67	126,133
Photon Technologies	115	150
Play It Again	10	106
Recreational Software	109	139
Renovation Products	45	122
Sega Corp.	28,29	116
Sligo Video	115	151
SNK	93	137
Starland Club	115	145
Sunsoft	15	109
T & E Software	12-13	108
Taito	17	110
Tengen	57	129
Tommo	51	125
Tradewest	3	102
Vic Tokai	99	138
Video Game Emporium	117	146
Virgin Games Inc.	11	107
Working Designs	33	114

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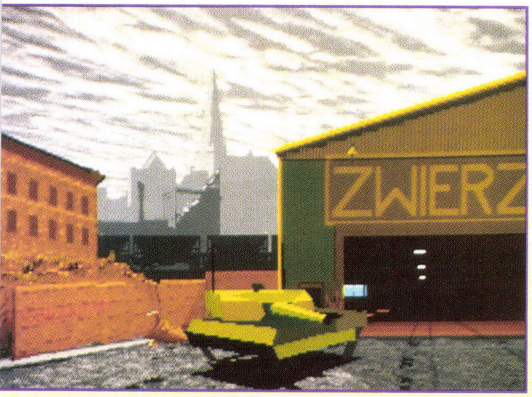
OFFER EXPIRES MAY 25, 1992

continued from page 95



Above: *Twilight 2000*, by MicroProse. Right: Interplay Productions' *Out of This World*.

PC). The company of the title is Universal Cybernetics Corp., which has developed a genetically engineered war machine that must be stopped. The computerist guides a team of six characters (two men, two women and a pair of droids), who must penetrate the security network to find and destroy the mutant robot. An edition of *Corporation* is also available for the Sega Genesis.

Time travel is the subject of *Timequest* (MicroProse for the Amiga and IBM PC). Trans-temporal traitor Zeke Vettenmyer is changing history in unpleasant ways, so it's up to the player to set the record straight in this action-adventure. Players meet famous historical figures from Hitler and Julius Caesar to Cleopatra and Michelangelo.

Victorian sci-fi gets a fresh airing in *Martian Dreams* (Origin Systems for the IBM PC), the second title in the *Ultima: Worlds of Adventure* series. The player, as the Avatar, flies from the 1895 Columbia Exposition to Mars in a shell fired by a space cannon. He encounters many famous people of the day and must explore the red planet to find a way to stop Rasputin's evil stratagem.

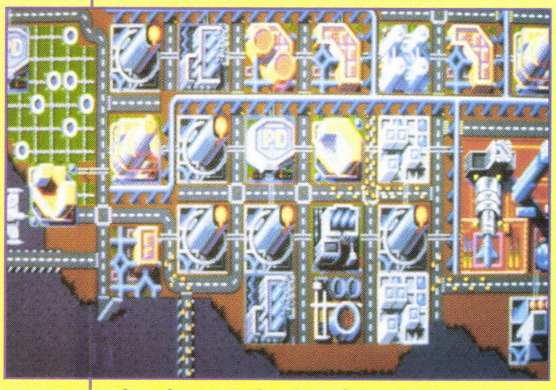
Above: *Martian Dreams*, by Origin. Above right: Maxis' *SimCity Graphics Set 2: Future Europe*.

THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE

Sci-fi strategy games are among the most satisfying, because they provide the same kind of mental stimulation as written and dramatic sci-fi. Both action-strategy and contemplative-strategy contests offer plenty of pleasurable exercise for the brain cells.

Armada 2525 (Interstel for the IBM PC) is a multiplayer strategy game in which up to six participants (human or computer) try to conquer the galaxy. Both space and ground combat, as well as diplomacy, are components of a winning plan in this complex and challenging presentation of superpower collisions in the distant future.

European-designed *Imperium* (Electronic Arts for the Amiga, Atari ST and IBM PC) has over a hundred worlds for the would-be interstellar emperor. At issue in this absorbing strategy contest are the next 1,000 years of human history.



The player, as leader of the Earth, employs diplomacy, economics and military power to expand and enrich his domain.

Empire building is also the goal in *Overlord* (Virgin Games for the Amiga and IBM PC). The player becomes the government of a rising interstellar power. Clever manipulation of resources and economic development precede military adventures against rivals for galactic power.

SimCity Graphics Set 2 (Maxis Software for the Amiga, IBM PC and Macintosh) offers three scenarios: *Future USA*, *Future Europe* and *Moon Colony*. Loading the new visuals into the original game provides an instant face-lift.

Buzz Aldrin is currently working on a project sure to excite serious science-fiction gamers, *Buzz Aldrin's Race Into Space* (Interplay for the IBM PC). The simulation, available this spring, puts the computerist in charge of the space program. The competition to be the first country to land a mission on the moon will call for careful attention to detail, a clear overall strategy and maybe just a little luck!

CONFLICTS IN OUTER SPACE

Star Control (Accolade for the Amiga, IBM PC and Genesis) is an enthralling combination of strategy and action. Players control a variety of spaceships, each with special advantages and limitations, in outer-space combat in the 27th century. Some players become so captivated by the combat mode that they don't even bother with the strategic game.

Omnitrend is building a multi-title line called the Interlocking Game Series. *Rules of Engagement* (Omnitrend for the IBM PC) is a strategic-level space-war simulation that can access the same publisher's *Breach 2* for tactical-level combat. In *Rules of Engagement*, the player takes command of a space fleet against human and alien foes.

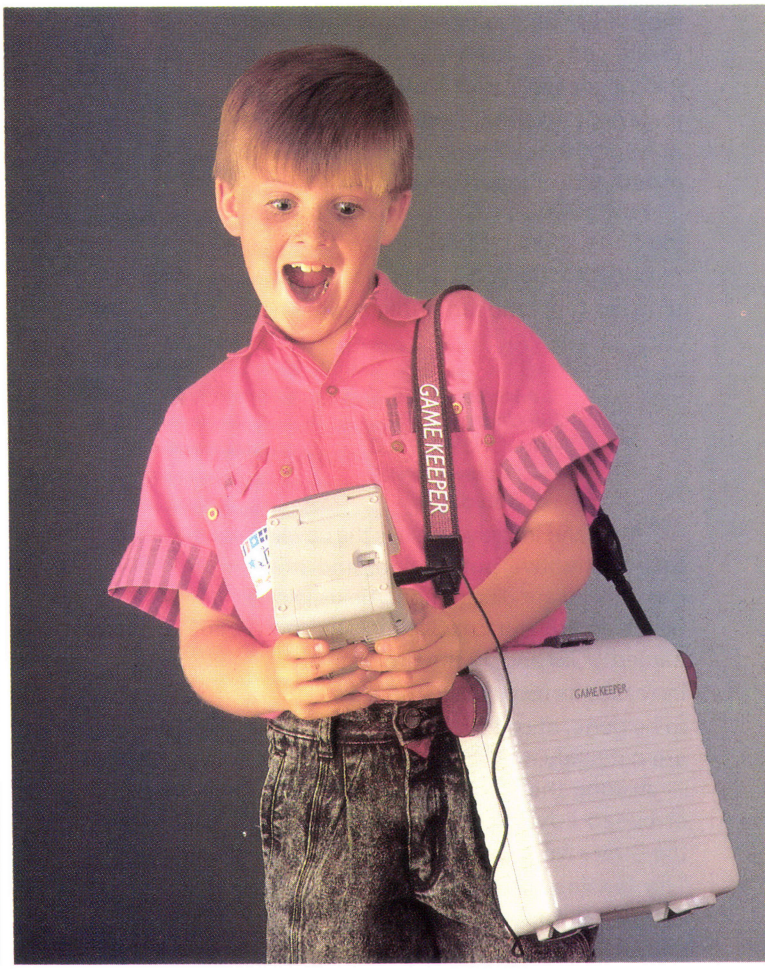
Warp Space (American Game Cartridges for the NES) is an action-simulation of outer-space combat. The solitary gamer, a recent graduate of the TerraFed Fleet Academy, rises through the fleet as he reaps the rewards that go to those who complete the dangerous missions. The wide variety of weapons and ship types, coupled with the large number of planets awaiting exploration, give *Warp Space* a high degree of playability.

THINGS TO COME

It seems fitting, when considering sci-fi games, to think about the future. Without a time machine to peek at next year's issues of VG&CE, it is impossible to even guess how many sci-fi video and computer games will be introduced within the next 12 months.

It's a safe prediction, however, that every type of sci-fi story, from space war to futuristic crime fighting, will be represented in the next year's worth of sci-fi gaming fun. And it's an even surer bet that science fiction will retain its strong link with interactive-electronic entertainment far into the future.

Keeping It Portable Was Tough...Until Now.



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CIRCLE #138 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Flippant Fanzines for All!

by Arnie Katz

Fanzine-mania is spreading across North America even faster than last winter's flu epidemic. Fortunately, the symptoms are enthusiasm and entertainment, rather than high fever and nausea. Now that electronic-gaming lovers have discovered just how easy it is to write and produce their own personal forums, the number of new fanzines hitting my mailbox each month has climbed amazingly.

That's why I'm taking what is, for me, the unusual step of paring my opening remarks to the bone. Let's get to some of those fantastic fan publications!

Video Gaming Monthly #2

Alexis Frias
265 Cherry St., #6-J
New York, NY 10002
$5 for six issues—Monthly
Ten pages

"New and improved" says the cover of this informative publication, and that's certainly an apt description. Alexis, aided by ace contributor Erik Schimek, has overhauled *VGM* and, in the process, greatly increased its usefulness. There's still more to be done, of course, but Alexis and Erik are definitely on the right track.

Among the many changes is broader-based coverage that now includes the Super NES, Genesis and Game Boy. The fanzine has also added a section called "Replay," which looks at old games, and a fanzine review column.

The main feature in #2 is an extensive critique of the Super NES, including hardware and the first wave of cartridges. Alexis strives for balance, but is a little more gung ho than some other reviewers. Erik tees off on the NEC CD-ROM unit in his new column, though his dismissal of CD gaming as a whole is premature.

There's still a lot of wasted space. The reviews could be lengthened without adding pages if Alexis organized the material more compactly. The graphic presentation of the ratings is also unnecessary, complex and space-filling. Still, this is a fanzine on the way up.

ATTENTION FANZINE READERS

The final edition of the Fanzine Readers List is available to any fanzine editor who sends a self-addressed stamped envelope. It's a great way to start your own mailing list of possible subscribers. If you want your name and address included on the list, simply write and ask. In either case, here's the address: Arnie Katz, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.

You can now get the fall Fanzine List from Arnie Katz (see address above), also available by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope. It contains the names, addresses, prices and brief content descriptions of dozens of current electronic-gaming fanzines. If you want to get into this fast-growing hobby, send for the list, and try some sample copies of the ones that sound best.

New World News #2

James E. Thomas and Ed Jones III
3200 Laurelhurst Drive
Rancho Cordova, CA 95670
No listed price—Frequent
16 pages

Neo•Geo owners often complain that the premium-priced, premium-quality system doesn't get much coverage in the prozines (professional magazines) compared to consoles like the Genesis and Super NES, which have a much larger ownership base. Enter *New World News*, a fanzine that is 100% devoted to SNK's machine.

If you own a Neo•Geo, then a subscription to *New World News* is virtually guaranteed to increase your gaming pleasure. It has reviews, news, previews of new games and a set of maps for level 3-8 of *Magician Lord*. There's even coverage of Neo•Geo titles as yet found only in the arcades.

Enthusiasm for the Neo•Geo is at a fever pitch in this lively and unusual-looking fanzine. James has some artistic talent, and his wraparound cover is a whirl of striking video-gaming images. The editors know the system, love it and share their excitement with the readers.

Micro-Bytes #6

Paul McAleer
2648 S. Kenilworth
Berwyn, IL 60402-2549
$8 for five issues (one year)
14 pages

Do you remember that wonderful 6502 system, the Commodore 64? Paul McAleer does! He and his staff editors, Dennis Page and Rick Kephart, fill their fanzine with informative articles to help the C-64 owner get the most out of his machine.

Micro-Bytes celebrates its first anniversary with its best issue yet. Besides excellent pieces on peripherals, modems and serious programs for the C-64 user, Paul announces online C-64 support through a special area on GEnie.

This doesn't have much about games, but this would definitely be the place to find out about funware for the C-64. Paul has an easygoing editorial style, with a touch of humor that makes all the hard facts exceptionally easy to read.

No Bull Reviews #1

Matt Bird and Brian Deuschel
P.O. Box 406
Penryn, CA 95663
$6—Bimonthly
Nine pages

This new fanzine's editorial tandem would like to become electronic-gaming fandom's answer to Siskel and Ebert. They're going to have to learn to write somewhat long, more detailed reviews of the games, but the idea has a lot of merit for anyone on a limited budget.

The premiere issue covers six games, one per page. Both editors comment on every title, and this dual look is sure to make those tough purchasing decisions a little easier.

Like most first efforts, *No Bull Reviews* has things that need to be corrected. There is no colophon (with mailing address and subscription information), and putting each review on its own page wastes space that could've held more reviews or other features. That notwithstanding, this is a bright addition to the fanzine field.

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COMPUTER STRATEGIES

How to Be the Best Wing Commander II

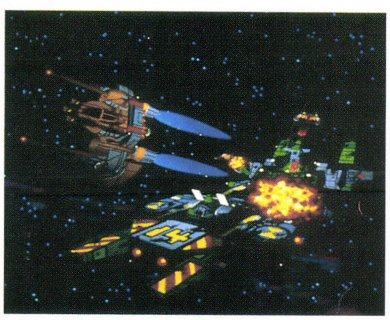
ORIGIN
Version: IBM PC

Wing Commander and *Wing Commander II* are the most impressive examples of computer space combat ever, with success well-known throughout the gaming community. *Wing Commander II* was rated as 1991's Computer Game of the Year. It goes beyond the rigors of the original game to offer a new lineup of Kilrathi and Terran Confederation ships, more cinematic sequences and, at an additional cost, a speech accessory pack that turns the game into the most exciting computer game ever. Your heart will certainly race during play.

Most people encounter frustration at some point during the game, if only because of the many types of ships and missions. Here are some tips to help make it through some difficulties in *Wing Commander II*.

Some of the skills from the first game are certainly useful in the sequel. Let's go over these before we get into the specifics of *WCII*. Remember that it is impossible to get your wingman to attack a particular ship, unless you first target that enemy and send the message to your wingman to "attack my target." The wingman will stay with that targeted ship until destroyed. The purpose of dividing efforts is to finish off the attacking force as quickly as possible. In addition to the communications command, you can also observe which ship your wingman himself automatically targets, and you can then focus your efforts on some other Kilrathi fur ball.

Speed change maneuvers put you closer to a winning attack. If you constantly adjust your speed, you can catch the Kilrathi off guard and get an important shot from behind or the side. The most important speed-related tactic is the "afterburner slide." This approach requires a burst of afterburner power at a 30- to 45-degree angle to either side of a Kilrathi ship and a hard turn toward the ship when its range is around 1,000 kilometers. This should put you on the side of the ship or right behind it. Then, fire away!



Kilrathi shields have a marvelous rejuvenating power. The best place to attack is from the side, especially for the new Grikath and Jalkehi ships, which have rear turrets. The last thing you want to see is the backside of one of these ships, because it would be just that—the last thing you'd ever see! By contrast, it is best to approach all other ships from the back, if possible, for effective, unimpeded shots.

More important than the position of attack is the frequency of gun bursts. Look at the right VDU display to tell you where the most damage is concentrated on the Kilrathi ship. Continue to fire on that section of the ship, the Achilles' heel that you create yourself. The purpose is to wear shields down to nothing, so that the next shot blows the Kilrathi out of the system.

The final general tactic involves large Kilrathi ships, which almost always come with a few escort ships that keep you busy until the transport or other battleship makes its jump point. The primary target is the battleship, while the escorts are mostly a nuisance that must be taken out in order to get to the battleship. Fire on them until there's one left, then let your wingman take care of the last one as you go after the big ship. Attacks on the big ships sometimes require missiles to destroy them before the jump point. Never fire your guns after letting loose a missile or torpedo (new to *WCII*). Wait until the missile or torpedo does its damage, then come in close with blazing guns or set up another missile.

The neatest elements of *WCII* are the rear turrets and the stealth fighters. The rear turrets let you use a variety of new tactics to take out Kilrathi ships. In particular, you can lure Kilrathi onto your tail, switch cockpits and blow him away. If you feel uncomfortable with the fur ball up your engines, turn to the side of an enemy ship and you can try to catch him in your rear sights. Heavy ships like the Broadsword move slower than others. If only one or two fighters are after you, it might be the easiest thing just to sit still

and fire as the Kilrathi pass. Some people might feel uncomfortable with this maneuver, but it works.

The stealth fighters in the Kilrathi fleet think that they're smart, but they most certainly are not. You can catch an unsuspecting stealth fighter almost immediately after he appears on your radar. He is probably still visible for a few seconds, so fire away to try to disrupt his stealth shields. Even a few seconds after the stealth fighter drops out of sight, you can still injure him if you correctly anticipate his flight plan. A well-placed shot may bring him out of hiding.

Taunting the enemy is a tactic that gets them away from important Confederation capital ships, transports and heavy fighters. Taunting also focuses the Kilrathi's attention directly on you. If you get desperate, ask for help from your wingman. At least you may preserve the ship you're escorting, at the expense of some pride.

For those really stuck in *Wing Commander, The Secret Missions 1 and 2* or *Wing Commander II*, I would strongly recommend Prima Publishing's *Wing Commander I & II: The Ultimate Strategy Guide*, by Mike Harrison, author of the *Tiger's Claw* magazine in the first game. This book details every mission in both games and the *Secret Mission* disks, offers lots of general strategies and Kilrathi ship tactics, and gives a behind-the-scenes look at the making of the *Wing Commander* games, which includes an interview with designer Chris Roberts.

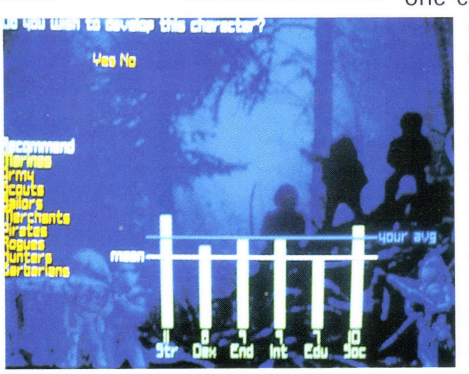
—Russ Ceccola

Become a Galactic Hero In MegaTraveller 2: Quest for the Ancients

PARAGON
Version: IBM PC

MegaTraveller 2 puts a player in charge of a group of five adventurers who must save a planet from being destroyed and find the people who want to destroy it. It is set in a future that possesses interstellar travel, laser weapons and other high-tech gadgets.

One of the most important steps in the game is the creation of the on-screen characters. Character generation is based on six basic attributes: strength, dexterity, endurance, intelligence, education and either charisma or social rank. With these parameters, the player chooses where the character receives his or her skills by selecting a career for the character to follow. The careers can be in the basic services (Army, Marines, Merchants, Navy or Scouts) or in other services, such as diplomacy or science. This is part of the process of character generation, so the player enters choices about the length of services and the types of skills that the character learned.



The player creates five characters as humans, vargrs (a race of doglike creatures) or any combination of human and vargr. Choices must be made carefully so that there is a balance of services and skills in the group.

At least one human character should have been in the Navy and another should have been a Scout. This provides a way to get around customs on a world where there is either an Imperial Navy base or a Scout station. (From the starport, go to either of these bases and use the door to get into the city. Since there is no requirement to go through customs, none of your weapons will be held by the authorities.)

There are basic skills that at least one character should possess. All the characters should have combat skills, especially with firearms. At least one character should be skilled as either a broker or a trader.

Since the characters aren't holding steady jobs, stocking up a ship with goods when leaving one planet for another is a dependable way of making money. Keep a list of prices for certain products. Don't keep track of all of the products, as there are too many to worry about. Stick to just a few, and remember that goods with a higher price per ton tend to make you more money.

One of the characters should have a ship, preferably a far trader. If more than one character has a ship, sell all of them except one far trader. If at least two characters in the party own a ship, do not worry about getting cash for retirement benefits. The proceeds from the sale are enough to bankroll the party for the beginning of the adventure.

The best bet is to concentrate on the actual benefits and not the cash. If a character receives more than one weapon as benefits, there is an option to take another skill in the chosen weapon instead of receiving two weapons of the same type. It is probably best to go for the extra skill, because only one weapon can be used at a time. It also isn't worth keeping the extra weapon and selling it; the money isn't worth it.

Choosing the party and outfitting the personnel according to these guidelines will greatly increase the chances of a successful adventuring party.

—John Schnyder

COMPUTER GAME REVIEWS

4-D Boxing

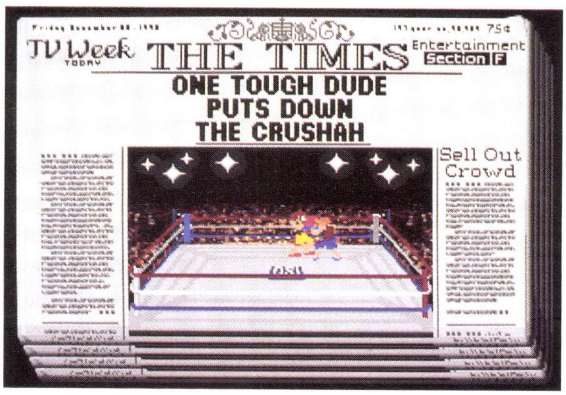
ELECTRONIC ARTS

Version: IBM PC ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

In the history of electronic gaming, numerous boxing-related products have crossed this desk. While many of these were statistically correct, and even exciting in one form or another, none of them actually captured the experience of being in the ring as completely as *4-D Boxing*.

Electronic Arts' star design group, Distinctive Software, combined 3-D polygon graphics and fluid animation in a process dubbed Tru-Motion. The process allows players to manipulate their on-screen alter ego in 27 different, lifelike boxing motions, utilizing a simple matrix and a two-button joystick. Alternately, when one knocks the opponent down, nine separate showoff moves can be selected, including a back flip. One special consideration concerning joystick selection is the sturdiness of the center yoke. The program generates a lot of excitement, and it's possible to actually rip the yoke out of a stick when emotions run this high.



The object of *4-D Boxing* is to develop a relatively unseasoned pugilist from 51st-ranked contender to World Champion in the selected weight class. The program recognizes the physical limitations of the human body and limits a boxer's career to 45 fights. (He'll start to tire after 35 fights and must retire if he loses any fight after number 40.) Before a fight, each boxer has the opportunity to "train in the gym" to increase punching speed, power and/or endurance. Players manipulate three sliding scales to determine the desired mix, and the fighter's statistic bars increase accordingly. Regardless of the mixture, the player's overall condition improves with each fight.

Electronic Arts avoided models of real-life boxers in favor of fantasy opponents with tongue-in-cheek names like "Ugottabe Kidding" and (my favorite) "Sadie Mazichism." Yes, there are female boxers in the game. Only the first few computer opponents can be taken lightly, however. The artificial intelligence gives each boxer a distinct style that attempts to capitalize on the particular strengths in the aforementioned attribute categories. For example, an opponent with a lot of speed and very little power might try to stay out of reach, moving in for quick flurries to try to win a fight on points.

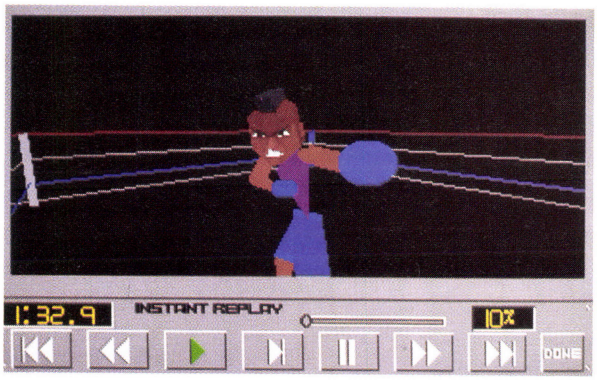
With only three major attributes modeled, one might think many of the matches would be similar, but nothing could be further from the truth. There is a lot of diversity in the opposition, and even veteran gamers will find the championship a tough nut to crack. Any of the opponents can stun the player-character enough to make him lightheaded and slow down his reactions. If this happens, try to back away and shake it off, or the end is near.

4-D Boxing sports some super graphic options, including nine adjustable camera angles and the ability to look through the eyes of either boxer. (Try a match with the unique perspective of looking at yourself through his eyes.) Also, at the conclusion of each match there is a replay of the last few seconds and a freeze-frame of the photo that appears with the newspaper headline. The music and sound effects are snappy and distinct, lacking only digitized taunts that one might hear from the opponent.

Boxing, strategy and arcade fans alike will have difficulty finding fault with this game. There is no split decision here: *4-D Boxing* simply wins by a knockout in the first round!

—Ed Dille

Electronic Arts
1450 Fashion Island Blvd.
San Mateo, CA 94404
(415) 572-ARTS



In EA's *4-D Boxing*, the gamer must develop a relatively unseasoned boxer to World Champion.

DESIGN SOFTWARE: More Than A Game...

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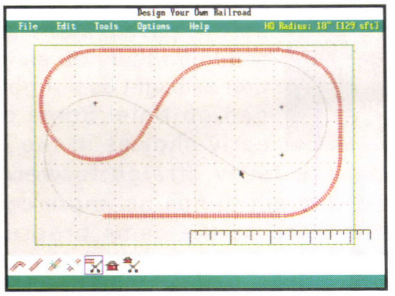
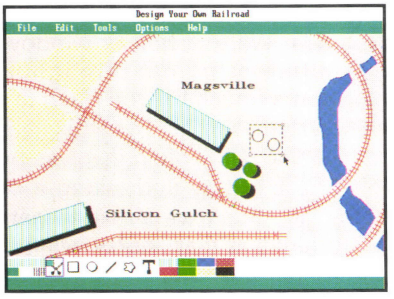
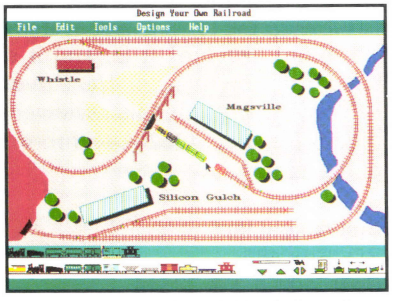


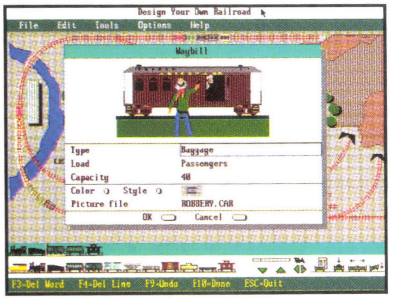
DESIGN! Sketch a track plan! Unique track-laying tools are specially designed to keep curves aligned and precise.



BUILD! Create a colorful setting! Draw buildings, trees, rivers, roads, bridges, circus tents- A complete set of drawing tools is included.



RUN! Make up a train and drive it down the track! Operate track switches. Each train has its own controls. But be alert! A crash leaves wreckage scattered everywhere!



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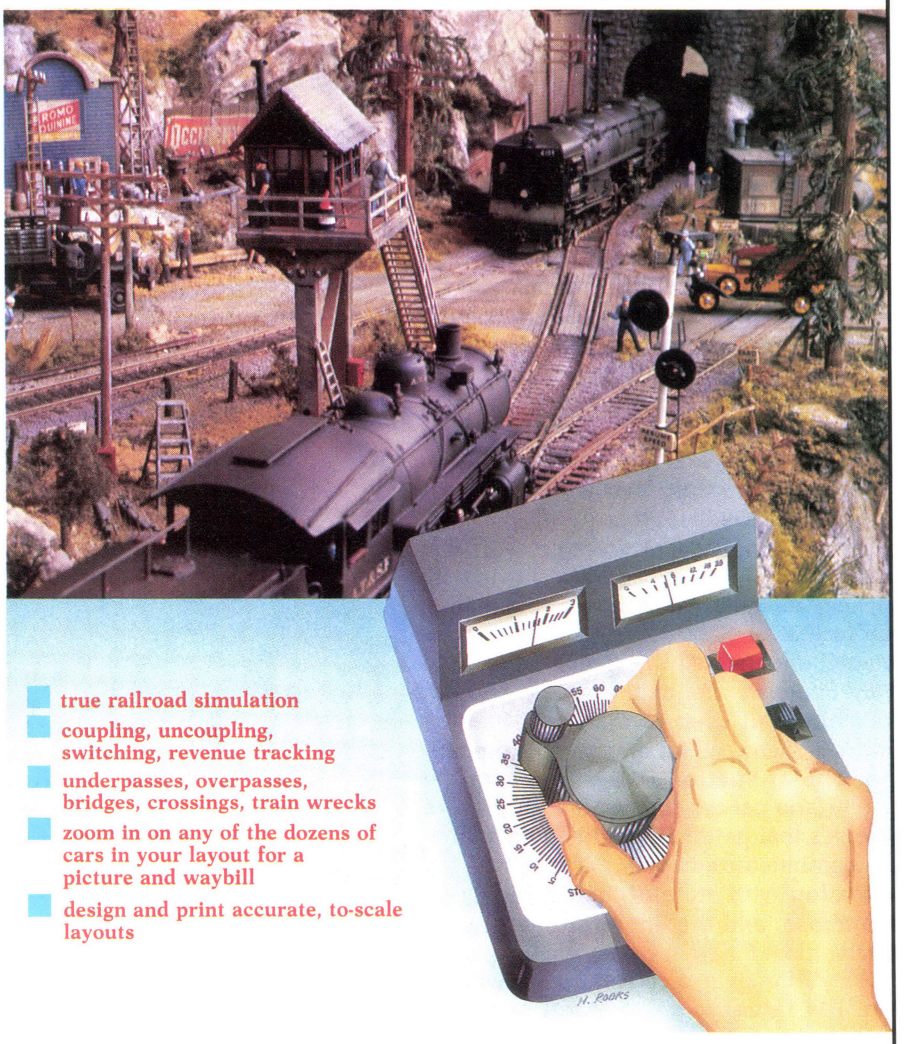

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– Larry Puckett
Model Railroading,
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The Adventures of Willy Beamish

SIERRA ON-LINE

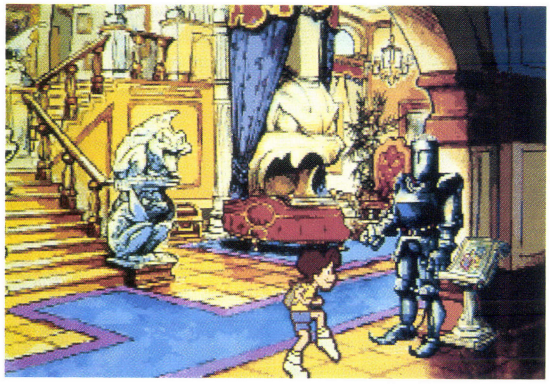
Version: IBM PC ($59.95)

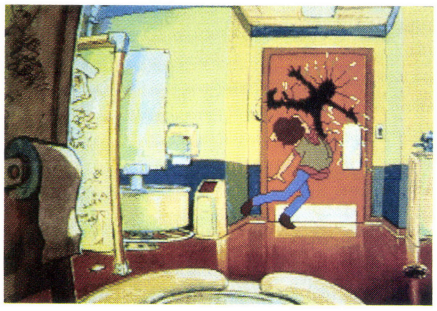
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

Childhood is a dynamic period in everyone's life; it remains just below the surface from then on, awaiting stimuli that cause us all to say, "Yeah, I remember that." This lasting bond with our formative years is the secret of success for television programs like *The Wonder Years* and Stephen King stories like *Stand By Me*. *The Adventures of Willy Beamish*, created by the Dynamix development group, will strike many of the same chords for players. Willy's world may initially seem a little outlandish, but it gradually becomes apparent that the majority of these skewed perceptions come from viewing the world through the eyes of a child. The experience is humorous and refreshing for players of all ages. It would, however, be a mistake to infer from this analysis that *Willy Beamish* is a "kids' game." While it is certainly not as complex in terms of puzzle solving as the *Space Quest* series, for example, it is an intermediate-level adventure that will keep most players embroiled for some time.

Even the most sophisticated players will be astounded at the program's graphics. Advance reviews that compared the animation to that of Saturday-morning cartoons actually understated the graphic quality of *Willy Beamish*. The depth of field and degree of detail used in many of the program's screens call for a more apt comparison: The animation rivals that used by Disney and others for full-length feature films; it's that good! Seven full-time animators combined traditional, hand-drawn cell animation with state-of-the-art digitizing techniques, and the entire project was in development for eight years.

Willy's family is a caricature of dysfunction. His father is so stressed out from work and family responsibilities that he plays with toys to unwind. His mother is so obsessed with being trendy that "yuppie" would have to be redefined to encompass her lifestyle. His older and younger sisters personify all the horrid things siblings can do, leaving Willy with the classic "middle child" syndrome. There is a baby-sitter who is practically a mobster, a bully always trying to shake Willy down, a pet frog that doesn't know when to stay put and various other equally individualistic characters.





Sierra On-Line's *The Adventures of Willy Beamish* looks like a candidate for 1992's Adventure Game of the Year award.

Willy's mentor is the ghost of his grandfather, who usually gives fairly sound advice, although sometimes a kid has to do what a kid has to do! Initially, the player must keep Willy out of military school, as his parents are apt to send him there on an infraction as slight as not going to bed on time. Some of the early choices in the game are fairly straightforward, although things get more complicated as the game progresses. There is also a little "combat" sequence where Willy has to fight off an attack, but the majority of the game is brain work.

The program uses a simple point-and-click mouse interface, with Willy's choices windowed at different points throughout the game (much like the *Heart of China* system, another Dynamix game).

Guiding Willy often involves being a bit of a bad boy and taking a chance (after all, didn't we all try to get away with things at that age?). Trying to outsmart his parents, the bully and the school system to get to the Nintari championships isn't easy. Then, of course, there are the Ninja tourists, the kidnapping plot and the guys who want to blow up the town sewer system.

Sound like fun? It is, and it simply should not be missed. *The Adventures of Willy Beamish* is this reviewer's candidate for the "1992 Adventure Game of the Year"!

—E.D.

Sierra On-Line
P.O. Box 485
Coarsegold, CA 93614
(209) 683-4468

F-117A: Stealth Fighter 2.0

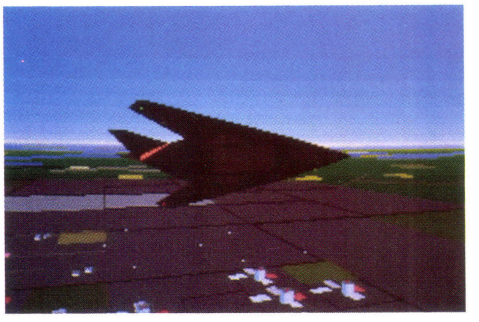
MICROPROSE

Version: IBM PC ($79.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

F-117A is not for the fainthearted; it has a very tough learning curve (no jumping behind the stick on this one). *F-19 Stealth Fighter* veterans will find that the original game has had a significant face-lift, and that its new beauty is definitely not just skin deep.

One will be initially impressed with the quality of the animated sequences. The exterior of the aircraft is accurately depicted (remember, appearances were only speculated on in the first release). The next notable thing is the vastly improved scenario selection. In addition to the original missions, Persian Gulf, Vietnam, Cuba and North Korea have been added as theaters of operation, the latter three as speculative future conflicts, of course. Within these theaters, missions occur under three different levels of tension (and, hence, different rules of engagement): Cold War, Limited War and Conventional War.



Each area of operations boasts accurate enemy orders of battle. Further, one can expect the exact same equipment to be utilized more effectively by more experienced troops. As such, even successful tactics frequently must be modified to remain effective against more capable adversaries. All nations have some form of Integrated Air Defense Systems (IADS). Military intelligence communities generally classify these systems by several "generations," based on their ability to track incoming air contacts and to engage them in multiple defensive layers. The *F-117A* manual is so exhaustively comprehensive it is practically a primer on the entire IADS concept. This is essential knowledge for the player who hopes to master the game—MicroProse should be commended for the obvious research that went into the documentation.

Gamers will be initially impressed with the quality of the animated sequences in *F-117A: Stealth Fighter 2.0*.

Stepping into the aircraft is a little overwhelming to a novice. Virtually every flight control is modeled; the only simulator more complex is the one utilized in *Megafortress*, by Three-Sixty, where the player is interfacing with all the crew consoles on an EB-52. This level of detail is fantastic, but the incumbent price is that many hours are required to develop the necessary intimacy to unhesitatingly react in combat situations and maximize the aircraft's potential.

Compounding this problem is a less-than-intuitive keyboard layout (for instance, the landing gear is controlled with the "5" key, instead of the "G" key). Many of the current control selections are based on a cutout keyboard overlay that utilizes only the outer keys. Most players just memorize the keys they need, occasionally referring to a command summary card, because overlays are cumbersome and usually get torn up with use anyway. Industry members should survey their flight simulator users and see if they can't come up with a standard key set for normal functions that incorporates intuitive logic. It certainly would make it easier for gamers to find that needed key in the heat of the moment. On the positive side, MicroProse did replace the grossly cluttered Heads Up Display (HUD) from *F-19* with a much more functional display.

Making safe landings is harder in *F-117A* than it was in the original *Falcon*, by Spectrum HoloByte. My only advice is to use a throwaway pilot, take off and immediately land again (practice, practice, practice). *F-117A* has a lot to offer to those with an appropriately high tolerance level for death, as one must get used to the crash-and-burn syndrome before winning the Congressional Medal of Honor. This is a super follow-up to the original game.

—E.D.

MicroProse
180 Lakefront Drive
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(301) 771-1151

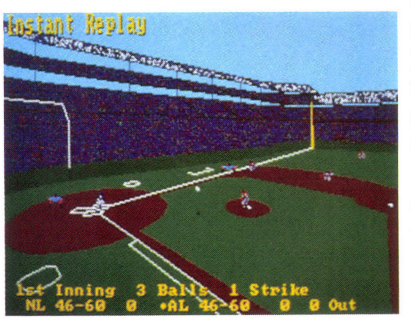
Earl Weaver Baseball II

ELECTRONIC ARTS
Version: IBM PC ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

In the software industry, sequels usually improve on the original, unlike their counterparts in other media. Unfortunately, this is far from the case for *Earl Weaver Baseball II*. The original *EWB* was constrained by CGA graphics and a market base of low-performance machines, yet it still achieved near-classic stature by combining accurate statistics with an easily manipulated arcade interface. Many office leagues frittered away hours of company time with the original release. The version 1.5 upgrade had good intentions, remaining essentially faithful to *Earl Weaver Baseball*, but was plagued with some anomalies. Electronic Arts knew that the public was hungry for a baseball game that maximized the potential of the newer generation of machines, so it started development of *Earl Weaver Baseball II*.

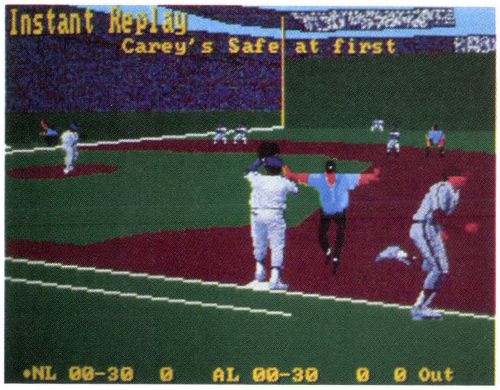
Electronic Arts' *Earl Weaver Baseball II* allows modem download from the STATS online service.



Somewhere between the high concept and the resulting product, something went dreadfully wrong.

EWB II has some of the most garish and unimaginative graphics ever witnessed.

Menu selections blend into the multicolored dots that are supposed to be spectators, until the player develops eyestrain. Although the batter is convincingly rendered, pitcher animations flicker and jerk. When the ball is hit, the full-field view looks like it was shot from the Goodyear blimp, with players reduced to indistinguishable little pixel patches. When a ball is fielded at one of the bases, the player shapes compress and distort, much like wide-screen movie credits displayed on a television set.



Statistically, something is amiss when Sandy Koufax walks the first four batters in the first inning. Earl confers, and Johnny Bench says, "Arm's fine; he's just a little wild right now."

Earl Weaver Baseball II does allow modem download from the STATS online service, plus players can now interact with *Lotus 1-2-3* spreadsheets. Unlike the original *EWB*, however, the user must have a *Commissioner's Disk* add-on to run any kind of league options, such as trades, reserve activation and the like.

Finally, the game lacks historical accuracy in terms of managers, eras of play and even which league people played in. There will be a lynch mob in Cooperstown tonight.

—E.D.

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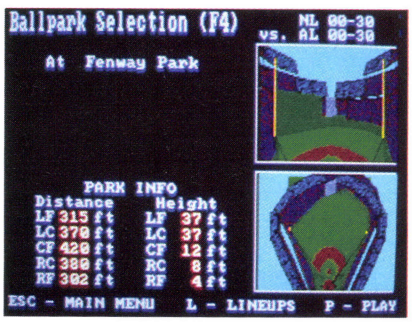


Gunship 2000

MICROPROSE

Version: IBM PC ($69.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10

Helicopters are the most fascinating of vehicles to fly in simulations. Because of their separate controls for lift and motion, and their unique aerodynamic abilities that allow hovering and hiding, helicopters offer a high degree of flexibility and creativity in missions and tactics. MicroProse's *Gunship* has held its own against other helicopter games over the past few years, and it deserved its preeminence. Yet, despite its strengths, that game was not without flaws. The controls and interface made it difficult for new players. Now, MicroProse has updated that award-winning helicopter simulation with the release of *Gunship 2000*, and the new program is a vast improvement over the original game in interface, graphics and music. In addition, it offers some new challenges: There are now many missions in Europe and the Middle East that employ up to five gunships.

Mastery of the game takes time, but the short tutorial in the manual gets even novice pilots up in the air in only a few minutes. After that, the missions proceed at a pace that players can manage, as their skills develop.

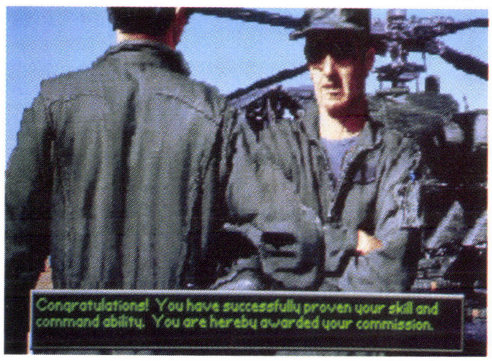
The first differences readily apparent are the slick introduction and mission setup screens. The difficulty levels are set by "reality switches" before a mission. Such factors as wind, visibility, realistic flight, enemy strength and realistic landings together determine the overall difficulty of the game. These factors can keep *Gunship 2000* as challenging as necessary, even for pilots who have gained familiarity with the game and its missions.

The player chooses the mission, helicopter types in the troop and ordnance; then it's time to fly. A campaign game puts the pilot through many missions, but the player can also opt for a single round. The missions vary in difficulty, from reasonable to (seemingly) impossible.

During flight, the player consults a map that pinpoints the mission objectives and current location. Although this map is invaluable, it is also enjoyable to personally locate the checkpoints during overflights of the mission arena.

Seven types of helicopters are available, and the player may use up to three kinds in the troop. The cockpits of the vehicles are different, and some gunships definitely handle better than others. *Gunship 2000*'s copters are much easier to control than the ones in the original game. Although controlling five helicopters may sound difficult, the game's interface keeps the process as painless as possible. A keyboard overlay helps with many of the functions, as does a list of control keys in the technical supplement. It does take some practice to become truly adept, but the game is fun even during that time.

The 3-D graphics and sound/music are very impressive. The terrain is detailed, and landmarks are clearly visible. As an example of the effort that went into the graphics, the pilot can hover behind hills and make surprise attacks. The mission arenas are part of a dynamic world that makes you feel like you're really there.



In addition to the scenery outside the gunship, the cockpits and other game screens reflect the careful attention to detail and attractive-

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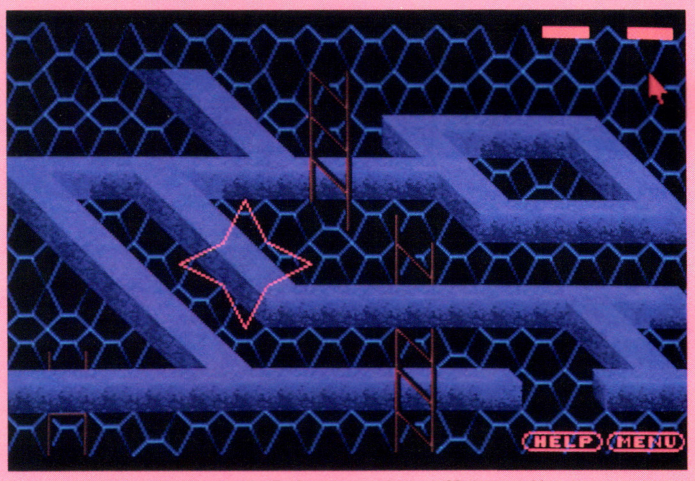

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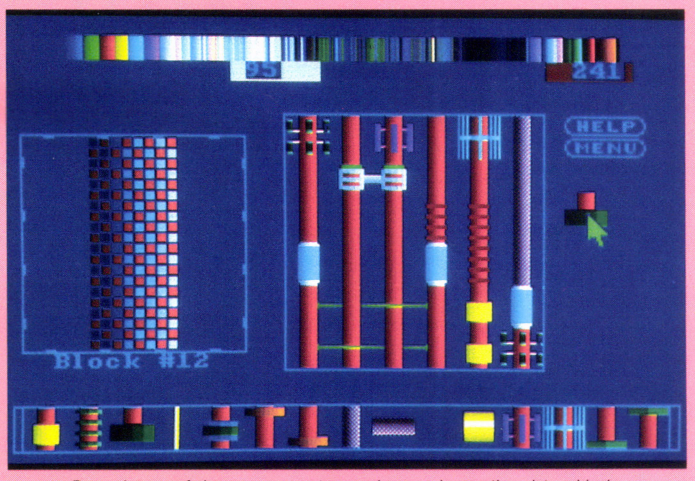
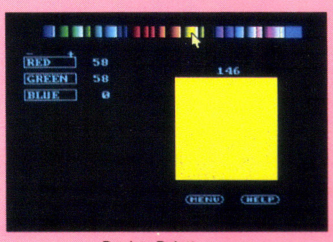
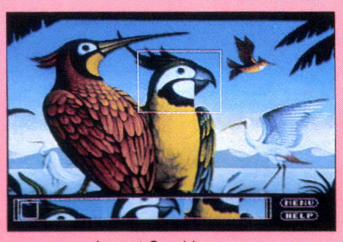


Draw pictures of characters, monsters, and scenes by creating picture blocks.



Design Palettes



Import Graphics

Animate Monsters

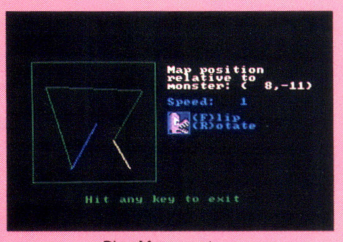


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table. Certain characters even appear to be digitized. Animation is smooth and quick. The music and sound effects are intense, and digitized voices make the experience that much more real. Although bells and whistles sometimes mask shoddy game play, *Gunship 2000*'s graphics and sounds make the program more exciting without sacrificing game quality.

A lot of games come with VCR interfaces to replay a particular mission or battle. *Gunship 2000* nods to this trend with a nice film option that allows full control of camera angles and playback of any mission, with a VCR interface that has all the tools necessary to record and then effortlessly edit the film for dramatic camera angles.

Gunship 2000 easily surpasses its older brother as the definitive helicopter simulation. Control of a troop of five helicopters gives players awesome power that translates into an exciting set of challenges in Europe and the Middle East. *Gunship 2000* establishes a new standard for helicopter simulations and low-altitude, air-to-ground attacks.

—Russ Ceccola

MicroProse
180 Lakefront Drive
Hunt Valley, MD 21030
(301) 771-1151

MicroProse's *Gunship 2000* easily surpasses its older brother as the definitive helicopter simulation.

Riders of Rohan

KONAMI

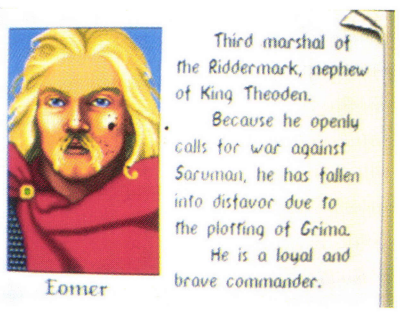
Version: IBM PC ($49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10

Many acknowledge J.R.R. Tolkien as the overall leader of all fantasy writers, past and present. *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* are part of most people's early reading exercises. Both were made into animated films, and the latter was recently performed as an elaborate puppet show in theaters. Literally thousands of words, in dozens of supplemental books and articles, have lauded these masterworks, which continue to delight readers today, decades after their first appearances.

At least seven gaming adaptations of the two Tolkien works (*The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*) have made it to the software market in the past five years, and *Riders of Rohan* is the latest. Although not the best of the bunch, *Riders* effectively captures the spirit of Tolkien with a slick interface, beautiful graphics and strong reliance on plot and characters.

Riders of Rohan takes place during the War of the Rings (from the second book of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, *The Two Towers*). Although Tolkien readers may enjoy this game more than those who missed (or avoided) the trilogy, it is not necessary to have read the books to successfully play.



The goal in *Riders of Rohan* is to command the forces of Rohan against the evil lord Saruman's forces, free hobbit buddies Merry and Pippin from a band of roving orcs and successfully neutralize Saruman on his own turf in the fortress of Isengard.

Many plot branches open themselves to players, but the end of the game is always the same, assuming that the player can defeat Saruman. Victory depends on a few factors: strength of the Rohan armies; strength of Saruman's forces; status of Isengard, Helm's Deep and Edoras; and the fate of certain characters.

This is, more than anything else, a tactical war game. Armies are moved around the main map of Rohan to oppose Saruman's forces as they are discovered. Battles take place on a separate screen that represents a small part of the terrain on the main map. It is easy to control the forces, but success comes slowly because of the vast number of battles. Tactical encounters consume time, but there's a quick-combat option that makes the game more enjoyable for adventurers who dislike war games.

The main screen is a map of the terrain, which includes forests, mountains, grasslands and rivers. Icons represent the armies of the player and Saruman, as well as other stray characters off on their own adventures. The tactical battle screens pop up when players decide to go through with a skirmish.

Riders of Rohan also sports some arcade sequences to liven up the game. Archery is a very difficult arcade game that usually results in the archer being shot. Duels are common, and this arcade sequence is actually fun, although challenging. Magic duel is the best, in which the gamer controls the wizard Gandalf against a Ringwraith. Gandalf hurls fireballs and magic bolts at the Ringwraith, and uses a shield and levitation to avoid his attacks.

Riders of Rohan depends a lot on the characters for the story's development, as they appear throughout the wilderness, based on previous actions and decisions of the player. Through the character interactions and the game's presentation as pages of a hobbit-written account of the War of the Rings, the entertainment develops more as a story than as a game.

Graphics in *Riders of Rohan* are particularly impressive. The main map and battle screens agree in color and terrain. The backgrounds of the arcade sequences reflect the location of the duel or archery challenge. Large pictures of the characters and a graphical,

intuitive interface make the game more accessible. Sound support is questionable because music plays through a sound board, but digitized sound effects come out of the computer's speaker. Both are nice additions.

This is certainly another success in the genre of Tolkien adventures. Although it may not be the definitive Tolkien game, it does a lot more than others to keep the spirit of the books alive through the dynamic game environment and by concentrating on a small part of the overall story of *The Lord of the Rings*.

—R.C.

Konami
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Corporation

VIRGIN GAMES

Versions: Amiga ($49.99), Atari ST ($49.99), IBM PC ($49.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	**5**	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	**8**	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	**9**	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10

Corporation takes place in an office building instead of a dank, underground bastille, but otherwise mimics dungeon-exploring games. The sci-fi setting places the player in the role of Zodiac agent on a top secret mission to infiltrate the Universal Cybernetics Corporation. One of the UCC's giant symbiotic humanoid killing machines has escaped from a factory complex and managed to avoid capture, while surviving on a diet of innocent civilians. Evidence that the UCC has been illegally manufacturing sentient creatures through genetic engineering must be confiscated and brought to the government.

Corporation would not boot up from the intro, no matter how clean the DOS 5.0 environment. Fortunately, the IBM PC version allows the player to boot directly into the game, bypassing the intro altogether. This worked fine from the normal DOS 5.0 environment.

Travel through the 16 floors (levels) of the UCC building is in first-person perspective, and auto-mapping is only possible if the cost and weight of a "backpack computer" can be managed. The mouse interface is excellent, although the keyboard is fully supported. To move, the player points (clicks and/or holds) at certain areas of an on-screen control pad. While initially confusing, with practice it allows such accurate control that the graphically based control pad seems to emulate a fine joystick. At 16 to 20 MHz, screen updates are fast, smooth and flicker free. At slower CPU speeds, the screen update is acceptable, but the animation is not quite as smooth.

There is an excellent game save function, but only one game in progress can be saved (unless the player runs from floppies and stores each saved game on a separate disk). The install program includes the requisite hard-drive option.

To enhance the RPG feel, the player is allowed to choose one of six characters (human or android), but there is no provision for changing characters during the game. Characters are rated for strength, dexterity, endurance, speed and intelligence. They can be hurt or damaged during combat, and they can "sleep," in order to restore depleted energy. Given the proper tools, repairs can be performed.

To give *Corporation* that "magical" quality so intrinsic to dungeon games, the developers incorporated "psionic powers," enhanced by collecting certain objects. These powers are used by human characters to levitate, heal themselves, repair damage to equipment or armor, increase body density (improves protective armor) and project a "mind blast."

The walls of the UCC offices are decorated in plain polygon fill, while the monsters and robots are highly detailed bit-mapped images. The VGA mode uses many shades of a limited palette of colors to give these sprites a realistic, three-dimensional look. The sprite-scaling routine is effectively implemented, but, at their largest, the creatures and robots tend to lose their initial high-res appearance.

The one really disappointing aspect of *Corporation* is audio. There is no background music, and the Ad Lib board outputs sound effects that are varied but unspectacular.

Corporation involves the player in an interesting sci-fi adventure, a nice change of pace from fantasy role-playing games. Prowling the halls of UCC headquarters in search of the laboratory where the genetic evidence is found is very enjoyable. There are many devices that can be used during the course of the game, and the inevitable conflicts with the UCC's genetically engineered "guard dogs" add spice to the otherwise austere office surroundings.

—Frank Eva

Virgin Games
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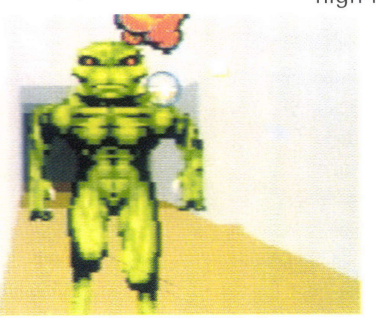
Corporation, by Virgin Games, involves the gamer in an interesting sci-fi adventure.



AD&D: Shadow Sorcerer

STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS

Versions: Amiga ($49.95), Atari ST ($59.95), IBM PC ($49.95)

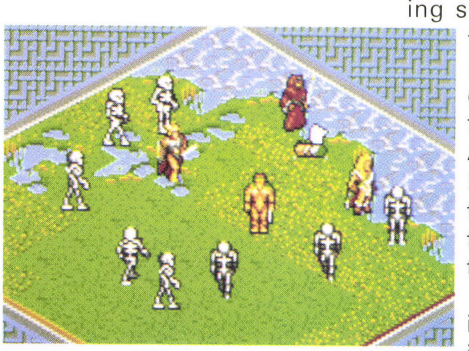
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	**7**	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	**6**	7	8	9	10

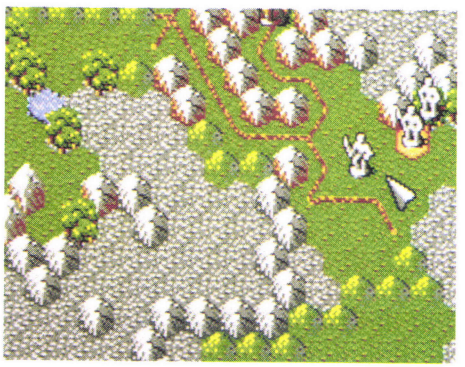
In tournament Advanced Dungeons & Dragons the good adventures can be played more than once. Each time, players have the same characters, the same goal and a variety of ways to complete that goal. Added to these factors are overpowering monsters, damaging traps and severe real-time constraints that encourage player mistakes. With accumulated wealth and experience almost meaningless, the winners are determined not by who completed the challenge, but by who lasted the longest. This atmosphere is what separates SSI's *Shadow Sorcerer* from its other AD&D games, but with mixed results.

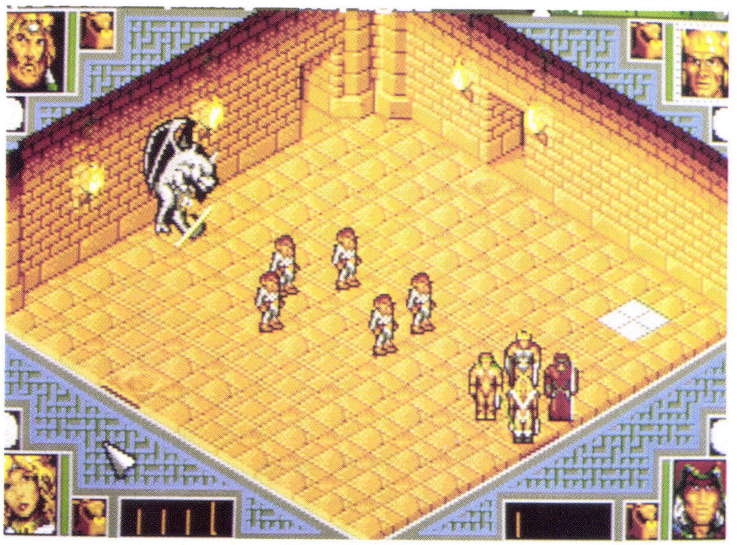
With the help of the Companions of the Lance, 800 slaves have escaped Pax Tharki and temporarily sealed their Draconian captors within the city gates. Hoping to find sanctuary in the Dwarven kingdom of Thorbardin, they must first escape Verminaard and survive the unknown territory before them.

The adventurers' party is composed of four characters from the pool of 16 companions and slave council leaders. When occupying the same hex as the main body of refugees, they may exchange characters depending on their health or skills. Party configuration is critical because some heroes' performance is directly affected by their companions, and, likewise, the refugees are more responsive to some characters than others. Also, since character death is virtually impossible, the best can remain in heavy rotation—healing time permitting.

Unlike most RPGs, *Shadow Sorcerer*'s two play modes are both overhead: a strategic view showing all explored territories and pursuing forces, and a 3-D tactical close-up of the active adventurers. In the latter mode, characters have the standard options of casting spells, attacking or attempting to communicate with strangers and picking up any objects. In combat, they can be ordered individually—a truly harrowing process given the game's real-time pressures—or fight according to player determined tactics. While this partial player input makes auto-combat much more intelligent than the other AD&D products, the computer still woefully mismanages spell casters.







The real-time action and the refugees provide the flavor to *Shadow Sorcerer*—troublesome. The slaves' survival is essential, so characters must continually look for food and shelter while they scout ahead trying to avoid the wilderness' dangers. The refugee council meets nightly and characters may use tactics ranging from logic to violence in an effort to keep the former slaves traveling south. Often the refugees split into two or more groups, refuse to follow player instructions and, when casualties grow too high, opt to return to their Draconian overlords. And while the best characters can handily defeat most foes, fighting the Draconian armies and Ember, their dragon, will yield a Pyrrhic victory at best.

Shadow Sorcerer's graphics are inconsistent: The scenery is detailed in the close-ups, but objects would often be unrecognizable if not for the sporadically labeled illustrations in the rule book. Likewise, player action buttons are both described and illustrated but never in the same diagram, adding confusion to the game's sense of urgency. And, while limited information does add a sense of mystery to the game, it also adds to the chances that players will need to buy the clue book ($12.95) advertised on the back of the rules.

The Dragonlance paperback novel *Wanderlust* comes with *Shadow Sorcerer*, but the insertion of a 300-page book smacks more of an excuse to inflate the packaging and price, or an apology for insufficient programming, than an attempt to complement or enhance the software.

Shadow Sorcerer provides more than a sufficient challenge for those who crave fantasy role-playing with a greater emphasis on overall strategy.

—David Moskowitz

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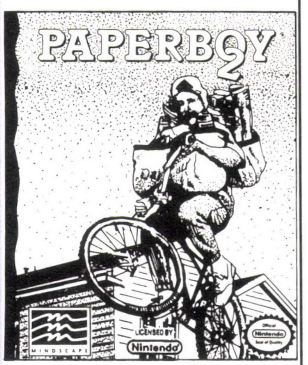

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CIRCLE #142 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Questions, Answers and Addenda to the World of Electronic Gaming

by the Game Doctor

Greetings and salutations, oh patients of the Game Doctor. First off, an apology to the Fruitman, whose request for a complete history of the *Tetris* litigation mess is sill being untangled and reconstructed through various sources (trust me, this one's a doozy!); but we should have the complete, untold story next issue. In the meantime, we have lots of fascinating Qs from the information-starved gaming public, so let's get to it!

question

I am the proud owner of a Sega Genesis, an NES and a Game Boy. I was wondering if you, as the Game Doctor, could answer my questions: Does Sega have any plans to make *Final Fight* for the Genesis? If so, when? Also, are Super Famicom games compatible with NES software?

—Adrian Salgado
San Gabriel, CA

answer

At this point in time, *Final Fight* is being published exclusively for the Super NES by Capcom. As Capcom is one of Nintendo's most important licensed publishers, I think the chances of seeing this game on the Genesis are slim and none, and I believe Slim just left town. However, look for *Streets of Rage*, a very similar and enjoyable Genesis product.

Super NES and NES games are not compatible, and, at press time, Nintendo continues to maintain that it will not produce an adapter for the Super NES that would make this possible.

question

With the release of the new Super NES, does that mean that the NES market will be all but finished? I assume some companies will still make software for the NES, but, since the Super NES is Nintendo's newest machine, all the really decent games will be for it. I've already seen some previews for games like *Zelda 3* and some RPGs I enjoyed on the NES. I hope to see more, without having to spend another hundred-plus dollars on a new system, and, if that is what I have to do, I just might get a Genesis.

—Eric Jones
Warren, PA

answer

Game systems have life cycles, just like human beings. The difference is that the life cycle of even an extremely successful video game is usually less than half a dozen years. The 8-bit world is in decline. Product is being discounted to the $20-and-under price point, and that leaves slim profit margins for everyone involved. On the other hand, the only 8-bit games likely to attract any attention are those using the newer, more expensive Nintendo special chips. The inclusion of these software-based upgrades, however, raises the price of each game unit to a point where it can't compete with the discounted product.

In short, the 8-bit market appears to be dying, with less and less product likely to be available as time goes on.

question

I'm writing to thank you for all the interesting information you've bestowed upon me and for bringing back many nostalgic moments of when Atari was King.

I became interested in computer and video games when I was ten (I'm 21 now) and have seen a lot of history. Back in the early '80s, there was an add-on peripheral for the Atari 2600 called the "Starpath Supercharger." I was wondering if you could shed some light on this little-remembered part of video-game history, and tell me just how it worked and what happened to the company that made it?

—Michael Javorka
Whitehall, PA

answer

I'm sorry I couldn't print your entire letter, Mike, since I really enjoyed it, but space limitations being what they are, well....

The "Supercharger"—I believe they later changed the name to the "Arcadia Supercharger," not to be confused with Emerson's programmable Arcadia 2001 game system—was basically a memory extension board that worked like so: The Supercharger itself was inserted into the game slot on the 2600. It had a wire running off it that plugged into a standard cassette tape recorder. All games were on audio tape cassette, and there were a few interesting titles, especially the pre-glasnost *Communist Mutants From Outer Space*.

Starpath was eventually purchased by Epyx, which absorbed much of the key personnel, while other team members were among the folks who designed the original Amiga chip set.

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question

What's up, Doc? First of all, congratulations! You've made it a whole ten years. Here's to ten more! In ten years I would guess you've received millions of letters. Let's think about those letters for a minute. Think hard!!! In ten years, what question asked of you took more research, was more thought-provoking and was the all-around most challenging for you to answer? Did you ever find the answer? If so, what was it?

—Jason White
Hillsborough, NC

answer

Frankly, Jason, your question came pretty close—close enough to win you a Game Doctor Prize Packet.

But I think the question that has been the most baffling and impenetrable of my career was the one asking me to work out the complete saga of the many, many *Wonder Boy* games (several of which don't even feature the star in the title, such as the NEC CD-game *Monster Lair*), one of the most tangled licensing/sequel messes the microcomputer medic has ever encountered. As for the answer to that question, various people at various companies have promised answers for so long—and failed to deliver—that I am taking the matter out of their hands. And I promise that the complete *Wonder Boy* bibliography will appear within the next two or three issues, if not sooner!

question

Where do you get a Game Genie? How much does it cost? And can you please send me an order form?

—Christopher Gutierrez
San Diego, CA

answer

Game Genies, from Galoob (in the USA) and Camerica (in Canada), are available in almost all electronics, computer, video-game and toy shops as a result of Nintendo's injunction being overturned. They cost under $40, but the Doc doesn't have the facilities to send out order forms, even if I had any. But they're everywhere. Trust me.

question

I am a 40-year-old gamer who has been reading your column ever since the days of *Electronic Games* and have always thoroughly enjoyed it. When I get my subscription issue of VG&CE, your column is one of the first I read. The mature humor and wit you interject is greatly appreciated, and the information is always interesting. One big problem, though: Your column is too short. I would like to see—and I think others would, as well—the *Game Doctor* expanded to four pages (or even more).

I would like to ask you a favor. Could you find out how I can get a copy of the first edition of VG&CE? I have all the issues except that one.

—Joe Kowalewski
Philadelphia, PA

answer

I love letters like these. I wish more people would write them to my boss, though. Let 'em know you want to see the Game Doc's space increased to 20, maybe even 30 pages. Heck, eventually we may wind up with the whole darned book! If I told you how it breaks my (sob) heart to (sniffle) have to cut some of the brilliant and heartfelt (choke) letters I get, well, your collective hearts would break. So write those letters and tell the "powers that be" that the *Game Doctor* deserves not only increased space, but perhaps an entire spin-off book. Oh, and don't forget to mention the TV series, and, of course, you'll want to discuss the healthy raise I receive. But don't let *me* influence you!

Now, after all the lovely things you wrote, I wish I had better news on that elusive first issue of VG&CE. The publisher's policy is not to stock back issues of any of the company's many magazine titles; even Associate Editor Mike Davila confesses to not owning a complete set of VG&CE.

The best bet here is to contact our two favorite sources of old video games and related materials: Frank M. Polosky, P.O. Box 9542, Pittsburgh, PA 15223, and Jim Redd, of Pleasant Valley Video, 8141 Pleasant Valley Road, Camden, OH 45311; (513) 787-4707. These folks stock extensive back issues of game-related materials. Good luck!

question

I recently talked to the folks at the local store about purchasing a Super NES, and they told me that they could fix it so it would play Super Famicom games. How is this done? Can it hurt the system or void the warranty? Also, a lot of Super NES reviews have talked about "slowdown" of certain games due to the slow processor of the Super NES. How bad is this slowdown, and is it bad enough to really get in the way of play?

—Mike Sieber
Wheeling, WV

answer

At this point, the process of converting Super NES games to Super Famicom format and vice versa is a simple matter of either adding an adapter or altering the external configuration of the cart slot—that is, widening the slot so it can accept the differently shaped casing, a process that *will* likely void the SNES's warranty. The internal board itself is identical. This is bad news, coming on the heels of the original rumors that the two systems would be totally interchangeable. But hang out, more heinous news is yet to come: Word is spreading of "lock out" chips which, even *with* adaptation, will not run on the sister systems!

As to the "slow" speed of games on the Super NES, the fact is, the machine runs at less than 3 MHz, which is, indeed, rather slow for a machine that is designed to run fast-moving video games. We've heard talk of various software and CD-based fixes, but, for now, the Super NES simply isn't the fastest machine on the block.

More to come, so be here next month for the latest details on the gaming scene. Till then, aloha, dudes!

Remember, send those questions, comments and corrections to the ***Game Doctor*, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.**

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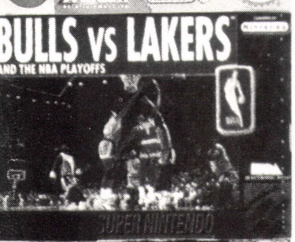

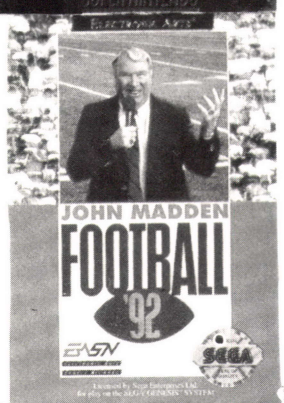

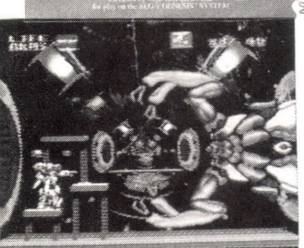

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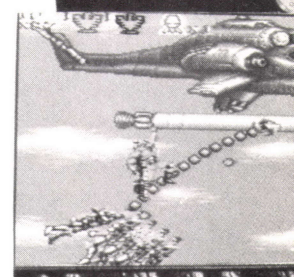

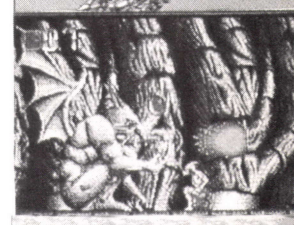

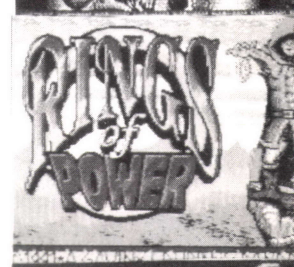

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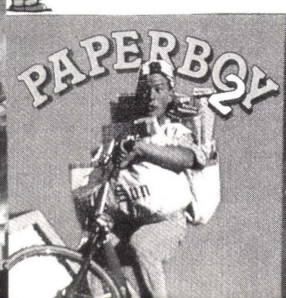

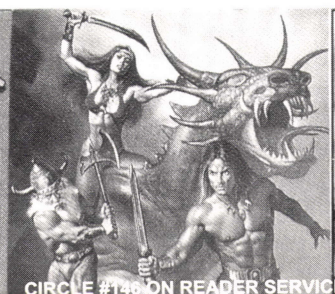

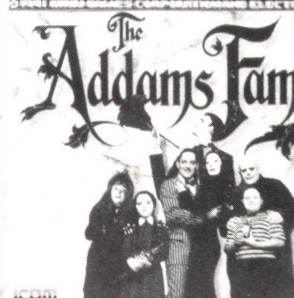

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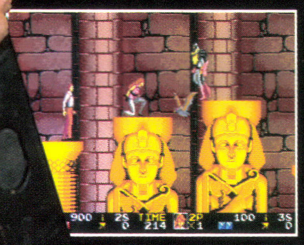

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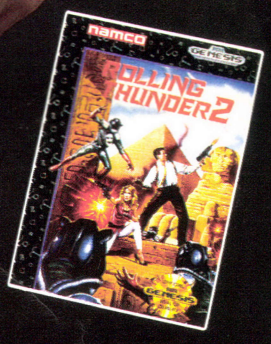

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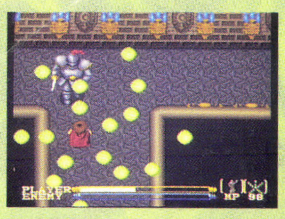

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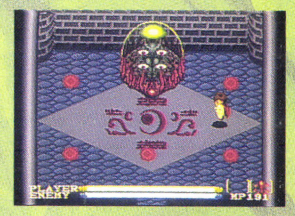

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